

**THE INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT WITH INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE uMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY**

**by**

**KOGI GOVENDER**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters in Environmental Management,  
School of Life and Environmental Sciences,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
Howard College Campus,  
Durban.

**March 2005**

## PREFACE

---

The work described in this dissertation represents the thesis component of a course-work Masters in Environmental Management and was carried out in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban, under the supervision of Professor Tim Quinlan.

This study represents original work undertaken by the author and has not otherwise been submitted in any form for any degree or diploma to any tertiary institution. Where use has been made of the work of others, it is duly acknowledged in the text.

This dissertation was made possible through funding from the CSIR.



04/04/2005

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Professor Tim Quinlan for his guidance, encouragement and advice in conducting this study.

I would like to thank the CSIR, Division of Water, Environment and Forest Technology for the financial support received for this study, and the EMS-KZN Business Area for their support and encouragement. A special thank you to Shamini Naidu for reviewing this dissertation.

I am grateful to the Integrated Development Planning Department of the uMhlathuze Municipality for so willingly allowing me to analyse their IDP and SEA reports. Special mention must be made of Hennie Smit and Thea van der Wateren.

My husband Dan – your patience, understanding, love, encouragement and support has enabled me to ‘push on’ and complete this thesis.

Finally, to my granny Mrs M. Rama, you are a source of inspiration to me – I dedicate this thesis with love to you.

## ABSTRACT

---

The fundamental benefit of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in South Africa is the integration of the concept of sustainability into plans and programmes. This provides the means to incorporate the environmental and social objectives of districts and regions into their policy, planning and investment decision-making processes. At present, there is limited legislative support for SEA in South Africa, and there is little incentive for municipalities to pursue SEAs. All municipalities in South Africa are however, required by the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) to undertake an Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process to which SEA can add value, by providing a practical guide to integrating the concept of sustainability into the planning process. Furthermore, by integrating SEA with the IDP process, the ethos of sustainable development and the country's Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) policy and legislation can be effectively applied to local government development planning.

The uMhlathuze Municipality embarked on an SEA linked to their IDP process in 2002. The City of uMhlathuze is unique in that it has a rapidly evolving industrial sector within a poor community base. Basic priorities include job creation and fostering a better quality of life, whilst allowing for further development in an already polluted environment. An attempt was made by the Municipality to integrate an SEA with the IDP process to allow for environmental and sustainability considerations to be reviewed against the prevailing environmental conditions. The CSIR was commissioned to undertake this study. In theory, SEA incorporated into the IDP process would ensure that the urban plan for the Municipality is along a sustainability trajectory.

This study critically assesses SEA by reviewing its origins, logical connection to the IEM framework and, its application in South Africa. The study also critically evaluates the uMhlathuze Municipality's IDP reports, to determine whether there is value in SEAs integrated into the IDP process. The challenges faced and lessons learnt for the development of a common approach to the integration of SEA into the IDP process are highlighted.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY.....	1
1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
1.3.1. Theoretical objectives .....	3
1.3.2. Methodological objectives.....	4
1.3.3. Practical Objectives .....	4
1.4. UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY: A CASE STUDY FOR INTEGRATING SEA INTO IDP .....	4
1.5. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY .....	5
1.6. OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION.....	7
<b>CHAPTER 2: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. INTRODUCTION TO IDP.....	9
2.2. THE EMERGENCE OF IDP.....	10
2.3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.....	12
2.4. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PRINCIPLES.....	15
2.4.1. IDP is a consultative process.....	15
2.4.2. IDP is a strategic process .....	16
2.4.3. IDP is an integrated approach .....	17
2.4.4. IDP is an implementation oriented process .....	17
2.5. THE IDP PHASES .....	18
2.5.1. Phase One: Analysis .....	18
2.5.2. Phase Two: Strategies.....	20
2.5.3. Phase Three: Projects .....	22
2.5.4. Phase Four: Integration .....	22
2.5.5. Phase Five: Approval.....	25
2.6. PROBLEMS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE IDP PROCESS.....	25
2.6.1. Overarching concerns.....	25
2.6.2. Process concerns .....	27
2.6.3. Content concerns.....	27
2.7. CONCLUSION .....	28
<b>CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION TO SEA .....	30
3.2. ORIGINS OF SEA.....	30
3.3. PROVISIONS FOR SEA.....	33

3.4.	DEFINING SEA .....	35
3.5.	SEA PRINCIPLES.....	38
3.5.1.	Substantive/Content Principles.....	40
3.5.2.	Procedural principles .....	41
3.6.	SEA APPROACHES .....	44
3.7.	PROBLEMS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF SEA .....	47
3.8.	CONCLUSION .....	49
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b>	<b>SEA AND IDP IN SOUTH AFRICA.....</b>	<b>51</b>
4.1.	INTRODUCTION.....	51
4.2.	SEA APPROACH FOR IDP .....	52
4.2.1.	The analysis phase of the IDP .....	56
4.2.2.	The strategies phase of the IDP .....	56
4.2.3.	The project phase of the IDP .....	57
4.2.4.	The integration phase of the IDP .....	58
4.2.5.	The approval phase of the IDP.....	58
4.3.	CONCLUSION .....	58
<b>CHAPTER 5:</b>	<b>AN ANALYSIS OF THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY IDP AND</b>	
<b>SEA PROCESS</b>	<b>60</b>	
5.1.	INTRODUCTION TO THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY .....	60
5.2.	BACKGROUND TO SEA WITHIN THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPAL AREA.....	62
5.2.1.	SEA for the Richards Bay Transitional Local Council.....	63
5.2.2.	SEA for the Empangeni Transitional Local Council.....	63
5.2.3.	SEA for the uMhlathuze Municipality .....	64
5.2.4.	Description of Phase One: Analysis .....	66
5.2.5.	Phase Two: Strategies.....	71
5.2.6.	Phase Three and Four: Projects and Integration.....	73
	Phase Five: Approval .....	76
5.3.	CONCLUSION .....	80
<b>CHAPTER 6:</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>86</b>	

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 2.1. The IDP Process (DPLG & GTZ 2001c) .....	18
Figure 3.1. The tiered approach to Environmental Assessment (DEAT 2000) .....	42
Figure 3.2. The SEA process (DEAT 2000).....	46
Figure 4.1. Integrating the IDP process and elements of SEA .....	53
Figure 4.2. Integrating SEA and IDP in theory .....	57
Figure 5.1. Integrating SEA and IDP in theory.....	65
Figure 5.2. SEA integrated into the IDP process in practice .....	77

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1. Definitions of SEA.....	35
------------------------------------	----

## **LIST OF BOXES**

Box 3.1. What makes SEA strategic?.....	37
Box 4.1. SEA guidance and legislation in South Africa .....	51

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: The South African EIA Process.....	100
Appendix 2: The NEMA Principles.....	103
Appendix 3: Location of the uMhlathuze Municipality .....	106
Appendix 4: The Organizational Chart of the uMhlathuze Municipality .....	107
Appendix 5: The Pressure-State-Response Framework.....	108

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a strategic decision-making support tool that proactively considers the opportunities and constraints that the environment places on development. By integrating SEA with the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process, the ethos of sustainable development and the country's Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) policy and legislation can be applied to local government development planning. This study focuses on IDP in South Africa and the IDP process, and critically assesses the concept of SEA and its application in South Africa in relation to IDP. It uses a case study of one municipal government's experience to illustrate the challenges and value of using SEA to inform IDPs. This Municipality is that of uMhlatuze, located in northern KwaZulu-Natal, and one of the first local municipalities to embark on an SEA linked to their IDP.

### **1.2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The need for development among underdeveloped communities and the lack of capacity (financial and administrative) within municipalities across South Africa resulted in the introduction of IDP. Integrated Development Planning was given legislative force in the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000). All municipalities were required to prepare IDP reports before March 2002. This was the first phase of structured planning within South Africa and many shortcomings of the IDP process were identified. In general, it was felt that whilst the IDP guidelines stressed the importance of sustainable development, many of the plans focused on socio-economic development tied to a spatial development framework (Smit, 2000), rather than substantiating how they would ensure sustainable development. For instance, many plans to date have focused on service delivery as the 'development' issue, and broader global environmental issues as well as impacts of plans on the environment in and beyond the municipal areas, were not addressed (Morris 2002).

The problem was highlighted in a workshop held in September 2004. The KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Planning and Development Commission (PPDC) commissioned a project on the relationship between environment and planning in KwaZulu-Natal, based on concerns that environmental management principles and legislation have largely emerged in parallel to development, rather than in concert with development planning.

Focus group discussions at the workshop highlighted the following issues (UKZN 2004):

- Development planning often overrides environmental considerations and there is a bias in planning to socio-economic issues;
- The environment should be the basis for development planning and should be incorporated into the early stages of the planning process. Furthermore environmental issues should inform development options and identification of resource opportunities and constraints;
- Current plans lack a strategic perspective and there is little integration of the biophysical, social and economic issues; and
- Strategic Environmental Assessment is a tool that can address these problems.

Of relevance to this particular study is the final bullet which states that SEA is a tool that can address the shortcomings with development planning. Many authors have stated that SEA has the potential to assist in the implementation of the concept of sustainable development, for example, the determination of limits of acceptable change, and the identification of sustainability targets and indicators, ensuring that development is within sustainable limits (Therivel *et al.*, 1992; Therivel & Partidario 1996; Sadler 2001; Fischer 2002; and DEAT 2004).

At present, there is no SEA specific legislation or directive within South Africa, the SEA system, however, is supported by the National Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) guidelines, that require SEA to be undertaken as part of the planning process. The South African SEA guideline document states that the purpose of SEA is to promote biophysical, social and economic sustainability, through the incorporation of environmental issues at an early stage in the development of a plan and programme. The approach to SEA described in the guidelines is based on three key concepts, namely that SEA is: context-specific, sustainability-led and integrative

(DEAT 2000). Therefore, it is in this context that the study examined the scope and value of SEA in the IDP process.

### **1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This study has three general aims:

- To determine whether SEA is a useful tool for the formulation of Integrated Development Plans (IDPs);
- To outline the limitations, weaknesses and challenges of SEA with respect to the development planning process; and
- To make recommendations on how SEA can be used effectively in the IDP process.

This study has a number of objectives as outlined below.

#### **1.3.1. Theoretical objectives**

To meet this objective the theory behind SEA and IDP is explored. This includes interpretations by various authors on the critical factors affecting the emergence, development and improvement of SEA and IDP in South Africa. This research objective addresses the following:

- The origins and evolution of SEA internationally and within South Africa;
- The origins and evolution of IDP within South Africa; and
- How various authors (nationally and internationally) have interpreted and conceptualized SEA and linked it to development planning. This aim of this is to understand how sustainability is conceptualised and promoted through SEAs. As such the aim is to determine whether SEA can be used as a vehicle to ensure that sustainability is incorporated into IDPs.

### **1.3.2. Methodological objectives**

This objective broadly assesses how SEA has been used, and by reference to a case study, the scope and limitations of combining SEA and IDP are drawn out. More specifically the focus is on the following:

- The development planning context;
- How well an IDP integrates the SEA process and concept;
- Whether the IDP documents sufficiently incorporate various sectors, that is, are IDP reports integrative;
- Whether SEA influenced decision-making for IDP; and
- Whether there are plans/strategies to strengthen institutional arrangements to support SEA, that is, capacity for environmental management.

### **1.3.3. Practical Objectives**

To use the analysis of SEA and IDP, as well as lessons learnt from the case study to determine whether:

- There is a role for SEA within IDP;
- There is a practical design for the integration of SEA and IDP; and
- SEA can be improved to assist with formulation and review of IDPs in the future.

I outline below the case study on which this study is based, before discussing the methods and methodology of the research itself.

## **1.4. UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY: A CASE STUDY FOR INTEGRATING SEA INTO IDP**

The uMhlathuze Municipality, or 'City of uMhlathuze' as it is referred to, is a local municipality situated within the uThungulu District Council area in KwaZulu-Natal. The jurisdictional area includes a large section of coastline on the east coast of South Africa between Durban in the South and Maputo (Mozambique) in the North. It includes a deep water harbour, the Port of Richards Bay, which is the closest port to the economic hinterland (Gauteng) of the country, connected via a railway line (Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR 2002).

The City of uMhlathuze is unique in that it has a rapidly evolving industrial sector within a community base that is already subjected to a polluted environment, for example the area experiences high levels of sulphur dioxide emissions from industry. Development priorities include job creation, addressing service backlogs especially in the rural areas, providing affordable housing, and attracting investment for the development of the area. The problem lies in creating a balance between further development in a sensitive environment.

With the rapid development of the area since the 1970s, much of the natural indigenous landscape has been altered and transformed into a built environment. As a result of this, very few natural areas remain therefore future trade-offs made between the natural environment and development needs careful consideration (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004). An attempt was made to integrate an SEA with the IDP process to allow for sustainability considerations to be reviewed against the prevailing environmental conditions. In theory, SEA incorporated into the IDP process would ensure that the urban plan for the Municipality is along a trajectory of sustainable development.

The City of uMhlathuze was chosen as a case study for this dissertation as it was the first municipality to embark on an SEA integrated with their IDP process. Furthermore, as I detail in the methods and methodology section, many of the conclusions drawn from this case study was through personal involvement in the study.

## **1.5. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

To meet the theoretical objectives a detailed literature review was conducted to determine how sustainability is conceptualised and translated into practical actions within SEA. Furthermore, the IDP guideline documents stress the importance of sustainability, however, translating this into practical actions that considers all spheres of sustainable development equally, proves difficult in practice (Smit 2000). These conclusions are also drawn from the role that I played in the SEA and IDP process conducted for the uMhlathuze Municipality which I will outline shortly.

I therefore attempted to show through the literature review the value of SEA in development planning. For example, the KZN PPDC project states that SEA can address problems experienced in planning. The literature also promotes SEA as the tool that will solve all planning problems.

As highlighted earlier, the City of uMhlatuze embarked on an SEA linked to their IDP process. The aim was to ensure that equal consideration was given to the natural and socio-economic environmental issues in the development planning process. The CSIR was commissioned to undertake this study and my involvement in the project was that of project manager. As a result of this, I was able to follow the IDP process from initiation through to completion and attempted as far as possible to integrate the SEA into the planning process. My role however, was that of a consultant and hence was not able to influence internal decision-making processes that determined which aspects of the SEA were included in the final IDP.

To provide a convincing argument that SEAs have the potential to enhance IDPs a broad analysis of the Municipality's IDP reports were carried out using the overarching criteria for sustainability. The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the extent to which the principles of environmental management and sustainability have been incorporated into the IDP reports.

Criteria for the review of the IDP and SEA process were formulated based on several literature sources including the IDP guideline document; The National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998); Agenda 21; The DEAT SEA guideline document; Morris 2002; Todes 2002; and Govender 2004. The sustainability aspects were translated into questions that were used to interrogate the IDP reports. These questions include:

- Does the IDP consider environmental legislation, in particular NEMA?
- Does the IDP define environment as made up of the social, economic and biophysical components, or is the environment considered to be just the 'green' issues?
- Was the IDP planning team of an interdisciplinary nature?
- Was the environmental manager of the Municipality or someone with environmental expertise on the IDP steering committee?
- Who was included in the IDP process?

- What methods of public participation were employed during the IDP process, that is were special initiatives undertaken to consult as widely as possible?
- Did the IDP provide a structure and mechanism for the responsibility and accountability of environmental issues?

Based on the analysis of the responses to the above questions conclusions were drawn on value of SEA within planning as well as the limitations of SEA. Furthermore this analysis aimed to determine whether gaps exist with the definition of SEA in literature (conceptual) as compared to a practical application of the tool (in practice).

Of particular relevance to this dissertation is that many of the assumptions and conclusions drawn are through my personal involvement in the case study.

## **1.6. OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION**

This dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter one provides an introduction, the rationale, aims, objectives, methods and methodology of the study. A brief overview of the study area is also provided. Chapter two explores IDP theory and practice in greater detail. The discussion in this chapter serves as a basis to identify where, how, and if SEA has a role in IDP.

Chapter three explores SEA in greater detail. The principles, approaches, benefits as well as the shortcomings of SEA are discussed. The intention is to determine whether the principles and approaches to SEA would add value to, and enhance the IDP process, that is, would SEA ensure that sustainability is the key principle upon which the IDP is founded. Chapter four focuses specifically on SEA and IDP in South Africa and proposes an approach for the integration of SEA and IDP.

Chapter five analyses the uMhlathuze Municipality IDP and SEA process. The aim of this chapter is to outline the planning context to determine whether and how the SEA was integrated into the IDP process, whether and how the SEA added value to the IDP process and influenced decision-making, and whether the result of this analysis can be

used to improve future SEAs and IDPs. The approach suggested in chapter four is tested with this case study.

Chapter six makes conclusions on whether there is a role for SEA within IDP, and if such a role exists, what it would be. Finally, using the lessons learnt from the case study analysis, some suggestions on how SEA can assist with the formulation and review of IDPs in the future are provided.

## CHAPTER 2: INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The objective of this chapter is to introduce the concept of IDP as well as explore IDP theory and practice. The broader aim is to determine whether SEA could be integrated into IDP to improve the utility of the latter. This chapter discusses the emergence of IDP, legislative context of IDP, principles that govern the IDP process, how these principles are put into practice, the IDP process, and sector plans that need to be prepared as part of the IDP process. This discussion serves as a basis to identify where, how and if SEA has a role in IDP.

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION TO IDP

Integrated Development Planning is a concept designed to improve planning, particularly at local government level, by encouraging holistic consideration of a broad range of socio-economic, environmental, legal and other contextual factors.

Traditionally, planning at the local government level was a process of trying to inform decisions about the allocation of resources of various kinds (Mabin 2002). As such, it has the potential to become a highly political and highly contentious process. Integrated Development Planning therefore emerged to bring about substantial changes in the planning actually practised at municipalities (Mabin 2002).

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) all municipalities (i.e. Metropolitans, District Municipalities and Local Municipalities) have to formulate IDPs. The IDP takes the form of a report that sets out a single, inclusive strategic plan for the development of the Municipality (RSA 2000). The plan is supposed to:

- i. Link, integrate and co-ordinate various proposals and practical initiatives for the development of the Municipality;
- ii. Align resources and capacity of the municipality with the implementation of the plan; and
- iii. Be compatible with national and provincial development planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation.

## 2.2. THE EMERGENCE OF IDP

Integrated Development Planning reflects the changes in the form and the role of local government promoted by the South African government since 1994. It is promoted as a tool to enable local government to be democratic and play a developmental role. In South Africa, Town and Regional Planning had developed as a control-oriented physical planning system (Smit 2000).

Planning pre-1994 in South Africa relied on strict development control mechanisms which were very technical in nature, and had little or no participation from other role-players and the communities (Christopher 1994; DPLG & GTZ 2001b). Planning usually referred to land use matters such as town planning schemes and other similar instruments relating to the zoning of land use (Mabin 2002). Furthermore, planning was principally based on a top down approach and was largely driven by apartheid ideologies (Morris 2002), that is, planning seemed to be pre-occupied with furthering the aims of the apartheid dispensation in promoting racially segregated spatial, social and economic development (DPLG & GTZ 2001b). The Groups Areas Act, Separate Development policies and betterment schemes of the apartheid era significantly influenced land use matters (Morris 2002).

Planning was also predominantly sector based, with transport, land use and infrastructure plans being prepared by municipal departments in isolation from one another. As such, planning seemed to be concerned with the physical development and sectorally-structured infrastructural delivery programmes by the public sector rather than with the social and economic dimensions of development such as poverty alleviation, social health and welfare.

When large numbers of impoverished people began streaming into cities, in search of employment and a better standard of living, efforts were made to make planning more development-oriented and less control-oriented; more proactive and less reactive; more process-oriented and less blueprint oriented (Fuggle & Rabie 1994). Planning has since undergone a dramatic reform since the new political dispensation in 1994 (Rossouw & Retief 2004). The focus of planning has shifted away from the traditional control of spatial land use and development activities, towards the goal of facilitating sustainable development (DPLG & GTZ 2001b).

Since 1994, a number of legislative and policy changes, have placed increasing responsibility on local government and expanded its role from mainly service provision to that of an active developmental agent (Mabin 2002; Morris 2002). I discuss these in greater detail in the following section. Planning within this context has also taken on a completely different meaning, where local government needs to plan for the overall development of the municipal area and not just for the spatial and land use matters within its area of jurisdiction.

Early political inputs into the planning reform include the African National Congress (ANC) Policy Guidelines for South Africa (ANC 1992) which proposed that a new system of municipal planning should:

- Ensure maximum involvement of communities and stakeholders;
- Be directed towards those in greatest need;
- Strive to break down the apartheid privilege, geography and institutional structures;
- Be aimed at ensuring integrated and sustainable development; and
- Be focussed on service delivery.

In the early nineties there was a focus around 'reconstruction' after apartheid and planning began to appear increasingly frequently as a key to accomplishing such reconstruction. For example, debates in the National Housing Forum and in the Local Government Negotiating Forum looked for appropriate means to 'reshape the built environment' (Mabin 2002).

By 1995, IDP had emerged as the key tool for local government to tackle its new developmental role. This approach to planning was promoted through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) office and the intergovernmental Forum for Effective Planning and Development (FEPD). The FEPD (1995) defined IDP:

*"...a participatory planning process aimed at integrating sectoral strategies, in order to support the optimal allocation of scarce resources between sectors and geographic areas and across the population in a manner that promotes sustainable growth, equity and the empowerment of the poor and the marginalised".*

As such, planning within this new development context has taken on a completely different meaning, where local government needs to plan for the overall development of the municipal area and not just for the spatial and land use matters within its area of jurisdiction.

### **2.3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

While IDPs have been described in policy and legislation since 1996, and forms of these plans have been developed since then, it is only in the last four years that the current version of IDPs has been formulated, and that statutory requirements for an IDP have been spelt out (Todes 2003). The overarching framework legislation, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), states that the object of local government is to (s152):

- Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities;
- Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner;
- Promote social and economic development;
- Promote a safe and healthy environment; and
- Encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government.

In Section 153 of the Constitution, a '*development role*' for local government is defined. This states that a municipality must:

- Structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote social and economic development of the community ; and
- To participate in national and provincial development programmes.

The IDP was introduced through the Local Government Transition Act (Act 209 of 1993) which provided for the restructuring of local government and sets down specific financial and budgeting requirements. Following on from this the Development Facilitation Act (DFA) (Act 67 of 1995) was promulgated. The DFA principles provide a policy framework with regard to the spatial dimensions of development planning. Section 2 of the DFA listed nine principles; these require development initiatives to (Chipkin 2003):

- Promote integration with respect to social, economic, institutional and physical aspects of development;
- Promote the integrated development of rural and urban areas in support of each other;
- Promote the location of residential and employment opportunities in close proximity to each other;
- Optimise the use of existing resources;
- Provide for a diverse mix of land uses;
- Discourage urban sprawl;
- Contribute to more compact cities and towns; and
- Contribute to the corrections of the historically distorted spatial patterns of South African cities and towns and the use of the oversupplied infrastructure.

To realise these principles, Chapter 2 of the DFA provided for a Development and Planning Commission in each Province. Amongst others, these bodies have policy making powers with respect to (Chipkin 2003):

- Planning frameworks, including the scope of planning, the levels of planning and authority;
- Policy and legislation relating to measures to identify, assemble and release development land for the benefit of low-income and disadvantaged communities; and
- Policy and legislation relating to land development and land use control.

Crucial elements of a policy, legal methodological framework for IDPs were established after the IDP process had already started. These are contained in the White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998) and the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000). Two other legal documents which resulted from the White Paper on Local Government have indirect relevance for IDP. The Municipal Demarcation Act (Act 27 of 1998) initiated a new demarcation process that has resulted in a dramatically reduced number of municipalities which are larger and in a better position to become viable local government units. The Municipal Structures Act (Act 177 of 1998) gives district municipalities more of a role in supporting local municipalities in drafting IDP reports.

Substantial meaning is given to IDPs in the Municipal Systems Act which defines IDP as one of the core functions of a municipality in the context of its developmental

orientation. The key principles of IDP as outlined in this Act are as follows (RSA 2000):

- Planning must be developmentally oriented, (i.e. geared towards fulfilling the objectives and duties of sections 152 and 153 of the Constitutions and towards the realisation, together with other organs of state of - the rights to a safe and healthy environment, protection of property, housing, health care, food, water, social security and education (s23); and
- Planning must take place within the framework of co-operative government. Municipal planning cannot take place in isolation but must be aligned with the plans and strategies of national and provincial government as well as other municipalities (s24).

As IDP was a relatively new approach to development planning for local government, a special task team in the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) with support from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) developed an IDP guide pack consisting of six guides for the preparation of IDPs. These guide packs provide guidance on all aspects of IDP including its methodology, institutional organisation, the form of public participation and the way cross-cutting issues can be incorporated into planning (UNDP-SA 2002). In addition, there was a nation-wide support system for local municipalities in the form of Planning and Implementation Management Support Centre (PIMMS). Furthermore, extensive training was provided to municipal managers, councillors, officials and other planning professionals on the process. By the end of 2002, there was clear documentation in place to support IDP at municipalities.

There were also various literature in the early 2000s including but not limited to DPLG & GTZ (2001), Harrison (2002), Voice (2001) and Parnell & Pieterse (2003) which provided explanations and guidelines to varying degrees on how to do IDP. For instance Harrison (2002) and Parnell & Pieterse (2003) noted that IDP should enable a municipality to:

- Assess the current reality in the municipal area, including social and environmental trends, available resources, skills and capacities;
- Develop networks and linkages both formal and informal within municipal structures and agencies;
- Assess the varied needs of the community and different interest groups;

- Allow for a greater emphasis to be placed on basic needs of deprived communities and on issues such as local economic development, gender and the environment;
- Prioritise needs in order of urgency, importance and constitutional and legislative imperatives;
- Establish frameworks and set goals to meet those needs;
- Devise strategies to achieve the goals within the specified time frames;
- Develop and implement projects and programmes to achieve key objectives;
- Establish targets and monitoring tools/instruments to measure impact and performance;
- Budget effectively within limited resources and meet strategic objectives; and
- Regularly monitor and adapt the development programme based on the underlying development frameworks and development indicators.

## **2.4. INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

In 2001, the documentation (DPLG & GTZ 2001c) outlined clearly the core principles underpinning IDP. IDP should be:

- A consultative process;
- A strategic process;
- An integrated process; and
- An implementation orientated process.

Each of these principles is explored in greater detail below.

### **2.4.1. IDP is a consultative process**

Consultation within the IDP should include all residents, communities and stakeholders within the municipality as well as representatives from other spheres of government, sector specialists and other resources persons, (Rauch 2002) to promote the participatory ethos of the IDP process. The process should be designed in such a way that all role-players and stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to raise their concerns. However, some municipalities are too big in terms of population size and area to allow for direct participation of the majority of the residents in the planning

process. It is therefore necessary to structure the public participation process so that stakeholders can participate through organised frameworks e.g. ward committees and stakeholder associations. These individual associations must be represented on the 'IDP Representative Forum'. This forum is the formal link between the municipal government and the public. The meetings are to be attended by the municipal councillors as well as the IDP Committee members. This forum should become a permanent group that is in charge of monitoring the performance during the IDP implementation (DPLG & GTZ 2001b).

In summary as a consultative process, IDP is supposed to become a tool for democratic local government by ensuring that there is structured engagement with stakeholders throughout the IDP process. This includes ensuring that bottom-up and top-down decision-making processes of engagement are inter-linked and focussed analysis take place through creating forums for debate on the real issues affecting service delivery (DPLG *et al.*, 2002).

#### **2.4.2. IDP is a strategic process**

Strategic planning within the context of IDP is supposed to make the best use of limited resources (DPLG *et al.*, 2002). This includes making technological and institutional choices which relate to issues such as satisfaction of basic needs, poverty alleviation, gender impact, environmental impact. Furthermore, the plan must inform the budget and help expedite and improve implementation and ensure that integration of cross cutting issues is considered. The outcomes of the IDP process should be decisions on allocation of the municipal budgets, land management issues, promotion of local economic development, and institutional transformation (DPLG & GTZ 2001b).

In order to ensure that the IDP process is strategic the following should be considered (Rauch 2002):

- Prioritising a few critical issues that could be dealt with rather than creating a large wish list of actions;
- Focussing the analysis on collecting information that is relevant and accurate;
- Addressing the causes of the problems rather than just the symptoms;

- Ensuring the available resources and the relevant context is carefully considered; and
- Identifying and analysing alternative strategic options.

#### **2.4.3. IDP is an integrated approach**

'Integration' is reflected in the encouragement of political representatives and professional staff of municipalities as well as stakeholders to examine the inter-relationships between, and interconnectedness of the biophysical, social and economic systems and issues (DEAT 2003). Furthermore, the aim of policy, legislation and the guidelines is to ensure that municipalities create a vision for the future of their respective areas of jurisdiction, and also have coherent, feasible plans to achieve that vision in due course. Integration is reflected in this phase of development planning, as communication between communities, the political representatives and municipal staff, all with a range of different needs must occur. The vision and plans that are formulated must be understood and must appeal to all stakeholders involved.

#### **2.4.4. IDP is an implementation oriented process**

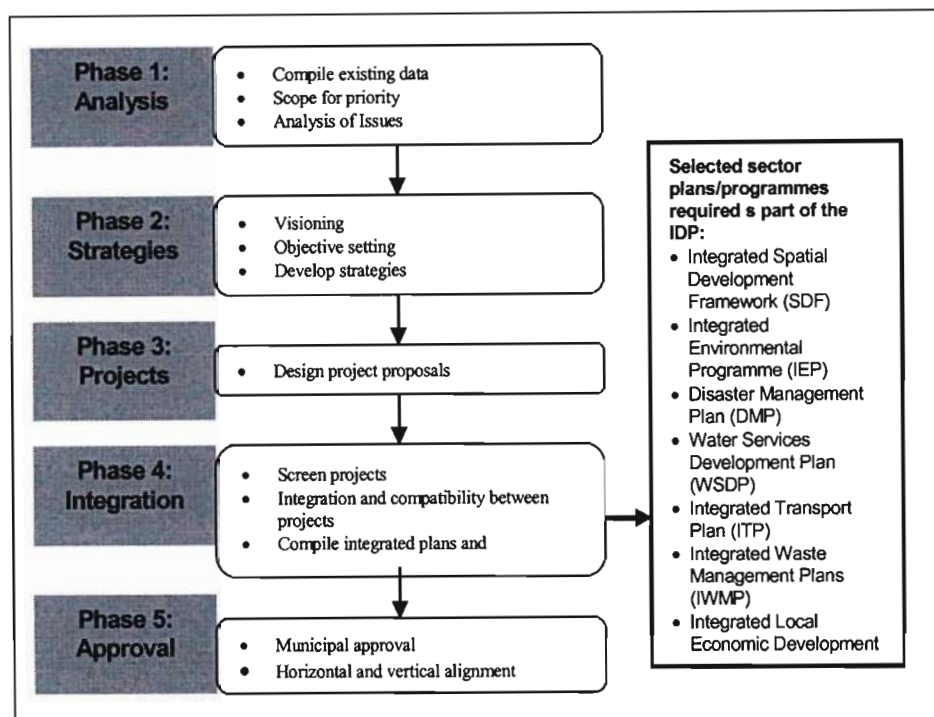
An IDP is supposed to initiate a process that is specific enough to inform budgets, business plans and land use management decisions (DPLG & GTZ 2001b). The aim is to ensure that IDP becomes a tool for efficient delivery of services by local government (DPLG *et al.*, 2002; Rauch 2002). Key principles include ensuring that:

- Projects are concrete, specific and implementable;
- The IDP complies with financial resources and the available institutional capacities;
- There is a close link between the planning and budgeting process;
- Institutional preparedness<sup>1</sup> is addressed; and
- Consensus has been reached amongst the various role players to enable implementation of the IDP.

---

<sup>1</sup> This is ensuring that adequate training is provided to different target groups who are involved in the IDP process, particularly municipal managers, councilors, human resources personnel and financial managers so that the IDP can be implemented effectively

In summary, these principles are the foundations for an 'event-centred' approach to creating IDPs. In other words, planning is to be conceived as a sequence of events. This approach is illustrated in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1. The IDP Process (DPLG & GTZ 2001c)**

The events within this approach are categorised into five phases as reflected in Figure 2.1. Each of these phases is described in more detail below.

## 2.5. THE IDP PHASES

### 2.5.1. Phase One: Analysis

This phase aims to understand the existing circumstances within the municipality. This requires understanding the causes of priority concerns and the links between them, rather than a simple description of conditions in the municipality. This is to ensure that decisions are based on (DPLG & GTZ 2001c):

- People's priority needs and problems;
- Knowledge on available and accessible resources; and

- Proper information and an understanding of the dynamics influencing the development within the municipality.

The activities that should occur during the analysis phase include:

- *Compiling existing information to reflect the current situation, trends and dynamics.*

The purpose here is to enable systematic analysis of issues (Luckin 2003). The IDP guideline document states that baseline information should include basic demographic information, service levels and gaps, financial resources, available institutional capacities, and a compilation of policy requirements (DPLG & GTZ 2001c). However, the guidelines recognise that this baseline information is not sufficient to make informed decisions. It is important to also understand particular conditions of an area where an IDP will be implemented (for example, the impact of alien vegetation, HIV/AIDS and cultural practices) (Luckin 2003). Accordingly there is a need for:

- *Consultation, participation and analysis*

This set of activities includes 'community/stakeholder analyses, 'in-depth municipal analyses and 'sectoral analyses. The IDP guide states that the purpose of community/stakeholder analysis is to find out whether people's needs and perceptions are aligned with the baseline information. This is done through workshops. In larger municipalities where not all residents and stakeholders can be actively engaged with during the process, the guidelines encourage the creation of an IDP Representative Forum. The forum must be an adequate representation of the community and stakeholders.

The in-depth municipal analysis involves looking at particular conditions of the area as well as the overarching issues such as available resources, competitive advantages and initiatives in the municipal area. This analysis is divided into the social, environmental, economic and institutional categories. The IDP guide states that these in-depth municipal analyses "have to be determined by those in charge of the decisions rather consultants commissioned with doing the analysis" (DPLG & GTZ 2001c).

The sectoral analysis focuses on each of the following issues (DPLG & GTZ 2001c):

- An economic analysis to ensure that the municipal development strategies and projects take existing economic potentials and limitations of the area into account;
- An environmental analysis to take existing problems and threats into consideration, as well as environmental assets (for example, sensitive habitats or ecosystems) which require protection or controlled management;
- An institutional analysis to ensure that the municipal development strategies and projects take existing institutional capabilities and constraints into considerations, and that they address institutional problems in the municipality;
- A spatial analysis to ensure that the municipalities spatial strategies and land use management decisions are based on a general awareness of spatial opportunities and constraints, the necessity for spatial restructuring, the need for land reform, and the spatial dimension of development issues; and
- A socio-economic and gender differentiation analysis to ensure that the municipality's strategies and programmes sufficiently consider the needs of the disadvantaged and marginalised residents.

Once the analyses have been completed, the results are supposed to be consolidated into a report that is presented to the IDP Representative Forum for comment. Furthermore, a summary paper of each priority issue needs to be prepared that includes facts, figures and trends related to the issue; causal factors and the wider context of the issue; and potential solutions available to resolve the issue. These summary reports should also be made available to the IDP Representative Forum.

### **2.5.2. Phase Two: Strategies**

The Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000) states that during phase two a municipality needs to determine:

- A vision for the long-term development of the municipality;
- Development objectives for the elected term of the council; and
- Development strategies which are to be aligned with the national and provincial sector plans and planning requirements.

The activities that should occur during this phase include:

- *The formulation of a vision to focus the attention of all stakeholders in creating a desired future for the municipal area.*

The vision is a short statement of the desired long term development of the area. Luckin (2003) states that the challenge is to develop a vision appropriate to the municipal area of jurisdiction on the one hand, and to recognise that systematic issues do not always respect administrative boundaries; hence, the vision should also be aligned with the district, provincial and national governments.

- *Determining working objectives to provide direction to the planning and implementation process.*

This means creating, in effect, a path with clear markers of objectives and steps towards fulfilling the vision.

- *Formulate strategies*

This means creating specific, clear guidelines for local use to ensure for cross-cutting dimensions such as spatial development principles, environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation, gender equity, local economic development and institutional aspects. A key consideration is that the strategy statements should be purposeful and action-oriented in order to reflect the general ethos of the 'event-centred' approach. Furthermore, the strategies should also provide a means of addressing the development priorities and objectives.

The result should be a strategy report that includes the vision, objectives and strategy statements for each of the priority issues identified. This report then forms the basis for the next step in the IDP process, but first it is supposed to be presented to the IDP Representative Forum for comment and approval.

### **2.5.3. Phase Three: Projects**

This phase is referred to as the 'nuts and bolts' phase during which the municipality has to make sure that concrete and specific project proposals are designed (DPLG & GTZ 2001c).

The emphasis is supposed to be on intensive stakeholder/community level participation, and liaison with national and provincial governments to ensure that the project proposals are aligned with the national and provincial strategies and procedures. Thus, a 'project task team' that is made up of technical officers and financial experts is formed. Preliminary budget allocations for each project are supposed to be established taking into account the limited financial resources and to ensure that there is a transparent and rational distribution of available resources.

A key feature is supposed to be indicators to measure the performance objectives, so that the expected benefits and the projects can be monitored and evaluated. The guideline documents (DPLG & GTZ 2001c) discuss input-output resource based indicators and not sustainability indicators. Therefore indicators usually focus on facts and figures, for example, percentage budget spent, and number of people employed.

The output of this phase should be draft project proposals that contain indicators to measure progress towards achieving the objectives, project outputs with targets and locations, major activities including timing, responsible agencies, cost and budget estimates and sources of finances.

### **2.5.4. Phase Four: Integration**

The purpose of the integration phase is to ensure that the results of the project planning are compliant with the vision, objectives, strategies and resources. This process is referred to as the 'harmonisation process' in the guideline documents (DPLG & GTZ 2001c) and should result in a consolidated spatial, financial and institutional framework for implementation. In essence, this is a consolidation phase of work up to that point in the process.

The actions that should occur during the integration phase include:

- The draft project proposals are screened to ensure that they are aligned with the vision, objectives, strategies and available resources; and
- Integrated sector programmes are prepared to ensure fulfilment of the sectoral planning requirements.

The outputs of this phase are 'sector' programmes and plans for each sector. Only summaries and not the detailed sector plans and programmes should be included in the final IDP report. These sectoral programmes should include (DPLG & GTZ 2001c; Luckin 2003):

- *Consolidated Sectoral Programmes and Plans*

This includes basic service plans such as a water services development plan (WSDP), and Integrated Transport Plan (ITP), and an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP).

- *Five-year financial plan for the municipality*

This purpose of this plan is to create a medium term strategic financial framework for allocating municipal resources in order to ensure financial viability and sustainability of the municipality's investment and operations. It is supposed to look at the capital and operational budget of the municipality and serves to link the IDP to that budget.

- *Five-year capital investment programme*

This programme should show the potential and actual capital investment from all sources including intergovernmental as well as external funding and serves to co-ordinate all investments.

- *Five-year action plan*

The action plan should be a phased overview of the projects and proposed projects and including major milestones and annual output targets. This plan should not be a report but rather a table or bar chart summarising project information over a time period of five years.

- *Integrated monitoring and performance management system*

This is a consolidated list of developmental indicators, targets and milestones for the IDP objectives.

- *Spatial development framework (SDF)*

The aim of the SDF is create a strategic framework for the formulation of appropriate land-use management system to inform decisions of development tribunals, housing departments and relevant development committees. Detailed maps must be produced to show the location of all projects and other related project and land reform issues.

- *Integrated poverty reduction and gender equity programme*

This programme should detail all the poverty reduction projects and indicates how gender equity is a component of these projects.

- *Integrated environmental programme (IEP)*

The aim is to ensure that urgent environmental issues are addressed and envisaged projects have no negative impact on the natural environment. Furthermore, the projects need to comply with National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act 108 of 1998) principles and the national environmental norms and standards. All projects that require an EIA should be identified.

- *Integrated local economic development (LED) programme*

The LED programme should deal with the promotion of local economic development.

- *Integrated institutional programme*

This programme should indicate the changes needed for the implementation of the IDP.

- *Integrated HIV/AIDS programme*

This should highlight the strategies developed to address the pandemic in the Municipal area.

- *Disaster management plan*

The aim of this plan is to enhance the capacity of the municipality to prevent and to deal with disasters and to avoid developments which are subject to the risk of disasters.

### **2.5.5. Phase Five: Approval**

The purpose of this phase is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders and interested parties, including other spheres of government are provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft IDP report before it is presented to the municipal council for approval.

The activities that occur during this phase should include:

- Obtaining comment from national and provincial government to ensure that the IDP complies with national and provincial strategies and legal and policy documents;
- Obtaining comment from the district municipality to ensure alignment of activities of adjacent municipalities;
- Obtaining comment from the public to ensure that their needs and priorities have been adequately addressed and to promote acceptance of the plan;
- Incorporating and review of comments; and
- Submission to the municipal council for approval.

The output of this phase should be an IDP report that has been reviewed by the various stakeholders, spheres of government and is adopted by the municipal council.

The guidelines produced by DPLG and GTZ set out a very clear template for creating an IDP. However, as discussed in the following section, in practice, municipalities in South Africa struggled to develop coherent IDPs.

## **2.6. PROBLEMS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF THE IDP PROCESS**

### **2.6.1. Overarching concerns**

In 2002, many municipalities in this first round of IDPs fell short of the basic requirements of integrated strategic development planning. Many local authorities were poorly resourced, lacked skills and capacity to fulfil their new mandate. Furthermore, councillors were newly elected (local government elections in December 2000) and had limited experience in meeting the demands of their constituencies (Smit 2000). Ambert & Feldman (2002) also affirm that assessments of the first cycle of

IDPs, were unanimous in stating that overall they had little impact on ensuring that local government priorities were identified during the process.

To ensure the effectiveness and consistency of IDP application in South Africa, German Technical Assistance funding made the development of guideline documents and training for officials of all municipalities in South Africa possible. Despite these initiatives, a key problem was that the IDP preparation process started before all the guides were published and distributed. As a result, it seemed that municipalities embarked blindly on a process without quite knowing what the end result was going to look like. Furthermore IDP was a relatively new concept to local government, and introduced a new planning procedure with new principles. These factors have informed critiques of the form and content of IDP. A problem pointed out by Mabin (2002) was that IDP should have been properly tested before wide-scale implementation. He states further that the guidelines present a false notion that planning processes can be standardised. In reality, development planning deals with complex and difficult problems and, therefore, cannot be generalised in terms of simplistic diagrams and templates as provided in the guideline documents.

Mabin (2002) noted that despite these problems, the policy and legislation was still a positive move towards making local government responsible for planning and thus responsible for overcoming the uneven development of apartheid and colonial past. However, it is that political interest in redressing socio-economic inequalities that has informed the actual design and implementation of IDPs, such that resultant plans have not always been 'integrated' or 'developmental' in design.

The overriding political interest has been founded in legislation, the Constitution (s153) (RSA 1996) defines the developmental role of local government by stating that, local government should structure and manage their administration, budgeting and planning processes to give priority to basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community. Consequently the critical and practical emphasis on social and economic development and upliftment, directed attention away from giving equal consideration to biophysical environmental issues as I illustrate in detail in chapters four and five.

### **2.6.2. Process concerns**

The White Paper on Local Government (RSA 1998) suggests that IDPs are not 'add ons' and should not be 'farmed out' to consultants. Many municipalities have however, fulfilled their legal requirement using consultants to run the process. Furthermore, the expertise of many of these consultants was typically 'Town and Regional Planning' who were not familiar with integrating social, environmental and economic aspects. Some of the outcomes were extensive 'shopping lists' of investment proposals that were not prioritised into addressing the immediate needs (Govender *pers. obs.*). Agyemang (2002) also stated that due to a lack of capacity at the local government level, the process became consultant driven. The outcome therefore, was that the beneficiaries did not own the product and thus the IDP became difficult to implement.

Furthermore, public participation was a novelty for many municipal authorities and simplistically applied by many consultants. Todes (2003) stated that although IDPs are seen as a participatory process, and considerable attention is given to the representation of a diversity of stakeholders and marginalised groups, the emphasis is more on consultation rather than on deeper forms of public participation. Furthermore, Luckin (2003) argued that for many municipalities in this first round of IDP preparation, the time pressures under which the IDP had to be completed, mitigated against a deeply participatory approach.

### **2.6.3. Content concerns**

A study was conducted by the United Nations Development programme – South Africa (UNDP-SA), DPLG and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) on sustainability in local governance in 2002. The aim of this research was to assess the extent to which sustainability principles, as articulated in Local Agenda 21 (UN 1992) were incorporated into the local government planning and implementation process. Four case studies were examined to assess their performance with respect to integrating sustainability principles. This included The Ugu District Municipality (KwaZulu-Natal); Buffalo City (Eastern Cape Province); The Greater Groblersdal Municipality (Limpopo Province); and The Kgalagadi District Municipality (Northern Cape Province).

The purpose of discussing the results from their study here is not to propose a reflection of IDPs in general but to provide insight into the potential problems that exist within the IDP process, and thus the contents of the IDP reports. Furthermore, this will be useful in the evaluation of the case study of the uMhlathuze Municipality discussed in chapter five.

The case studies reflect a strong move towards a more integrated and participatory approach to local planning. However, the extent to which the case studies successfully incorporated sustainability principles at a plan and project level varies. Integrated development plans in all cases had a strong focus on economic growth and promoting social justice, however, the principles of ecological sustainability and a concern for the future and linking local to global dimensions were lacking (UNDP 2002).

Furthermore, an assessment of IDPs in Mpumalanga Province conducted by Morris (2002) revealed that in general, IDPs afford a high priority to the provision and maintenance of services and in meeting the most basic needs of communities, such as provision of water and sanitation. The focus of the IDPs were on addressing social equity and community development objectives, and environmental issues and ecological integrity of various areas were not addressed in sufficient detail as the social and economic issues.

## **2.7. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has outlined the principles, procedures and problems that emerged during the practice of IDP. Integrated development planning is supposed to be the “principal planning instrument which guides and informs all planning and development, and all decisions with regards to planning, management and development in the municipality (Section 35(1)). It was promoted in South Africa partly as a result of the restructuring of local government and to improve political management and service delivery within local municipalities; hence, the purpose and processes have been clearly set out for use by municipalities. Furthermore, as IDP emerged out of a need to redress the socio-economic inequalities of the past, and given this strong mandate has resulted in a focus on socio-economic considerations at the cost of biophysical issues.

Part of the 'problem' is that that IDP is founded in the overarching framework legislation the Constitution (RSA 1996) which places emphasis on developing social and economic equity. Consideration to the biophysical environment in the Constitution is not afforded the same weighting.

In conclusion, this section has presented the argument that key difficulties were experienced in the application of IDP. These included:

- Poorly resourced municipalities that lacked skills and capacity to fulfil their mandate;
- Political representatives were newly elected and had limited experience in meeting the demands of their constituencies;
- The IDP was a new concept to many local municipalities and the IDP preparation process had started before all the guidelines documents were published and distributed;
- Proper testing of the IDP before wide-scale application did not occur;
- Public participation processes were not well facilitated and 'true' participation did not occur; and
- Many IDPs had a strong focus on socio-economic issues and did not give equal weighting to biophysical issues.

Nonetheless, in summary, IDP is a means to apply the notion of 'integration' and therefore, in principle could be usefully informed by SEA, particularly with regard to coherent expression of the notion of 'sustainability'.

## CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The objective of this chapter is to explore SEA in detail and consider its potential application in the IDP process. The principles, approaches, benefits as well as the shortcomings of SEA are discussed. The intention is to determine whether the principles and approaches to SEA would add value and enhance the IDP process. As noted in the previous chapter, SEA, in principle, could ensure coherent and concrete expression of the notion of sustainability in IDPs.

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION TO SEA

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a tool that aims to integrate the environment and promote sustainability in development initiatives (Thérivel 2004). The use of SEA as an Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) tool has emerged rapidly. This is mainly due to its promise to ensure early consideration of environmental factors in the development planning process (Thérivel *et al.*, 1992). Linked to this promise is the assumption that SEA will also help to achieve the goal of sustainable development (Bina 2001).

Literature has shown however, (Thérivel *et al.*, 1992; Sadler 1996; Brown 2002) that world-wide SEA has developed into a tool for the rapid environmental appraisal of plans and programmes. Very rarely is an SEA conducted prior to the conceptualisation of a plan or programme. If SEA is to ensure early consideration of environmental factors in the development planning process, then SEA is really a tool to assist initial and strategy-level planning, prior to the formulation of actual development plans.

### 3.2. ORIGINS OF SEA

The foundations of SEA were laid in 1969 by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA 1969) in the United States. NEPA required the preparation of an environmental impact statement for major federal actions that significantly affected the environment (Sadler & Verheem 1996). NEPA did not distinguish between plans, programmes and projects but referred to actions; in other words, no distinction was made between the

strategic and the project levels of decision-making. Since 1969, many countries have followed the example of NEPA and made provision for environmental assessment. However, they were typically aimed at projects and not at broader level development plans and programmes (Fischer 2002).

The components of a NEPA based assessment include (Wood 1995; Fischer 2002):

- Designing development proposals;
- Determining whether an assessment is necessary for a particular proposal;
- Deciding on topics to be covered in assessment;
- Preparing an assessment report (describing the proposal and the environment affected by it, assessing the magnitude and significance of impacts);
- Reviewing the assessment report to check its adequacy;
- Deciding on the proposal, using the assessment report, and opinions expressed about it;
- Monitoring the impacts of the proposal if it is implemented; and
- Consideration of possible alternative means for achieving objectives and goals.

Such assessment of projects, commonly referred to as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) gained impetus, and legislative provisions were made for the process of EIA throughout the world. Several countries introduced specific legislation, setting out formal requirements for environmental assessment, while other countries with well-established land use planning procedures responded initially by adapting existing planning legislation to place greater emphasis on the assessment of environmental impacts or effects (Gilpin 1995).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in 1987 stated the *“the purpose of environmental impact assessment is to give environment its due place in the decision-making process by clearly evaluating the environmental consequences of a proposed activity before action is take”*. Similarly, Thérivel *et al.*, (1992) defined EIA as the *“process of predicting and evaluating an action’s impact on the environment, the conclusions to be used as a tool in decision-making”*. The EIA process typically follows the NEPA-based assessment described above. The EIA process thus sought to meet concerns about decision-making at various levels (Petts 1999).

South Africa was fairly slow to develop and institute formal procedures for EIA. It was only with the enactment of the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989), that provision was made to determine the environmental policy to guide decision-making and to prepare environmental impact reports (Sowman *et al.*, 1995). The publication of a document entitled 'Integrated Environmental Management in South Africa' (Council for the Environment 1989) marked the introduction of this concept to South Africa. The term IEM was chosen to indicate a general approach that integrates environmental considerations at all stages of the development planning cycle that would be applicable to plans and programmes (Sowman *et al.*, 1995). A revised IEM procedure and series of guideline documents were published by the Department of Environmental Affairs in 1992. These documents focussed specifically on the EIA phase of development, with little emphasis on environmental management and ongoing monitoring during implementation (DEAT 2004a). A summary of the South African EIA process is provided in Appendix One.

The evolution of EIA has closely followed the trends in sustainable development philosophy. The first EIAs undertaken under NEPA in the 1970s focused on ecological impacts of development. In the 1980s, the focus shifted to consider the human environment as a key part of environmental assessment and this was further broadened in the 1990s, after the Rio Summit<sup>2</sup>, towards the concept of sustainable development<sup>3</sup>. The value of a holistic approach in assessment was recognised in the Agenda 21 report where environmental assessment was identified as a tool for providing information for sustainable development decision-making (UN 1992).

Along with the broadening focus of project-level EIA, has come the recognition of the need for new assessment tools that assess plans and programmes. Critics of 'traditional' EIA surmised that in the absence of a broader policy and planning framework, and without knowing potentially competing resource uses and values, it is

---

<sup>2</sup> The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit was held in 1992. At the Rio Summit a set of action points for sustainable development, collectively referred to as Agenda 21 (agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century) was agreed upon, and governments that signed up to these committed themselves to action.

<sup>3</sup> The most widely accepted definition of sustainable development, presented in the report 'Our Common Future' (WCED 1987), describes it as "*development that meets the needs of the current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and aspirations*". In this articulation sustainable development seeks to establish a path through which economic development can progress while enhancing human development and ensuring the viability of the natural systems on which that development depends (CSIR 2001a).

impossible to assess the 'significance' of impacts associated with individual projects (Rees 1988). In other words, there was a need to understand the opportunities and constraints posed by the environment on development options rather than the impacts of specific development activities on the environment. Strategic Environmental Assessment became the 'prototype' for this new approach to environmental assessment. It was developed to focus on the environmental opportunities and constraints for development, and thereby create the possibility to integrate the principles of sustainable development into decision-making. Thus, SEA emphasises a focus on 'sustainability' of development ideas in early stages of development planning.

### 3.3. PROVISIONS FOR SEA

In the international arena, SEA has been promulgated in the European Union (EU) Directive on SEA and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Protocol on SEA to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (DEAT 2004b).

The EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament requires Member States to develop mandatory procedures for the environmental assessment of certain plans and programs (Kjorven & Lindhjem 2002). In terms of this Directive, Member States are required to promulgate the laws, regulations and administrative provisions that are necessary to comply with the Directive within 3 years of its enforcement (European Union 2003).

Article 1 of the Directive (2001/42/EC) states that its objective is to:

*"...provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."*

The UNECE Protocol on SEA is a supplement to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (DEAT 2004b). The Protocol, which is open to all UN members, was adopted and opened for signature at the

Ministerial 'Environment for Europe' Conference in Kiev, Ukraine (21 May 2003). Signatories of this Protocol are required to evaluate the environmental consequences of certain draft plans and programmes. The Protocol addresses policies and legislation; however, it leaves the application of SEA to these as optional (DEAT 2004b).

Strategic Environmental Assessment in South Africa is not yet a legislated procedure. However, chapter 5 of NEMA provides for the development of procedures for the assessment of the impact of policies, plans and programmes. Chapter 5 of NEMA is currently being amended and it is probable that SEA or SEA-related tools will feature more prominently in the amendments (Weaver *pers. comm.*).

In addition, a requirement related to SEA in the context of spatial planning, is referred to in the Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations (Ch2,s2(4)(f)), promulgated in terms of the Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000). A local authority is required to undertake a "*strategic assessment of the environmental impact of the spatial development framework*". The White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management, produced by the Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs in 2001 (Section 3.2) requires that the spatial development framework for the Municipality is made up of four components, one of which should be an SEA. Furthermore, the White Paper on National Commercial Ports Policy, states that, "*SEA should be used for the proactive integration of environmental issues with social and economic issues at the policy and planning level*" (National Department of Transport 2002).

However, SEA as a concept has been around since the early nineties and it has been elaborated and even used as a tool in South Africa ahead of formal legal provisions for its use. The initial concepts related to SEA were articulated in an SEA Primer and Protocol produced by the CSIR in 1996 and 1997 respectively (DEAT 2004b). In 2000, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) published guidelines for SEA.

As a result of the perceived need for SEA, its promotion internationally, and elaboration ahead of definition in policy and legislation, the concept has been defined in different ways. In the following section I will examine the various interpretations of SEA.

### 3.4. DEFINING SEA

Several approaches and definitions for SEA have been developed recently in different parts of the world. These definitions reflect different understandings of its purpose. These are highlighted in Table 3.1. The definitions are listed in chronological order, from 1992 to 2004. The list provided in Table 3.1 is by no means exhaustive but aims to be representative of the main trends in the SEA arena since the first SEA publications in 1992. The analysis of these definitions suggests a number of trends.

**Table 3.1. Definitions of SEA**

<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment is about:</b>	<b>Source</b>
Evaluating the environmental impacts of policies, plans, programmes and their alternatives	Thérivel <i>et al.</i> , 1992
Applying the principles of EA to the various scenarios to assess the relative environmental impacts of each scenario. Eventually, the mix of options which can meet objectives in an environmental-sustainable way is selected	Sheate 1992
Carrying out an environmental impact assessment of certain types of plans and programmes. Often, environmental effects will be described in qualitative terms only	Verheem 1992
Subjecting 'policies, programs and similar actions by federal agencies [...] to environmental impact assessment'	Webb & Sigal 1992
Enabling the 'true environmental costs' to be quantified and taken into account as PPPs are drawn up. Identifying policies 'that might have considerable adverse environmental impacts'	Pinfield 1992
An instrument with 'considerable potential [...] for the integration of socio-economic development and the bio-physical environment at the regional scale'. In addition, 'SEA can be seen as providing a potentially effective vehicle for promoting sustainable development'	Glasson 1995
Enhancing the integration of environmental concerns in policy and planning processes, thereby helping to implement sustainable development	Thérivel & Partidario 1996
Evaluating the environmental impacts of policies, plans and programmes. Consideration is being given to the potential of SEA 'as a tool for urban sustainability'	Shepherd & Ortolano 1996
Integrating environmental and sustainability factors into the mainstream of development policy making as called for by the Brundtland Commission and Agenda 21	Sadler 1996
Evaluating the environmental consequences of proposed policy, plan or programme initiatives	Sadler & Verheem 1996
Assessing the environmental impacts of strategic action	SDG 1996
Providing a high level of protection of the environment	EC 1997
Assessing the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and programme	EC 1997
SEA is a process to assess the environmental implications of a proposed strategic decision, policy, plan, programme, piece of legislation or major plan	White Paper on Environmental Management Policy for South Africa, 1998
Providing explicit recognition of the environment in decision-making	Van der Vorst 1999

Assessing cumulative impacts (amongst other)	Treweek 1999
Addressing the impacts of PPPs preventively	Eggenberger & Partidario 2000
Identifying sustainable development opportunities	Eggenberger & Partidario 2000
Environmental quality and environmental consequences; SEA is to be conceptualised as a framework ...incrementally integrated into policy and planning procedures and practices	Partidario 2000
Early consideration of the environment	Clark 2000
SEA is process of integrating the concept of sustainability into strategic decision-making	DEAT 2000
Enhancing the attention and weight being given to environmental concerns in decision-making	Thissen 2000
Holistic understanding of environmental and social implications of the policy proposal; holistic sustainability analysis; 'The intention of SEA is moving policy (and PPP generally) towards sustainable outcomes'	Brown & Thérivel 2000
Decision-making tool for supporting sustainable development.	Fischer 2002
SEA is a process that aims to integrate environmental and sustainability considerations in strategic decision-making	Thérivel 2004

An analysis of these definitions suggests that there is growing evidence in the shifts in SEA. The initial definitions of SEA focus on '*impacts*' (Thérivel *et al.*, 1992; Sheate 1992; Verheem 1992; Web & Sigal 1992; and Pinfield 1992). This is because the understanding of the concept of SEA was derived from that of the project-based EIA. Initial principles for SEA and EIA were also perceived to be the same (Wood 1997; Lee & Walsh 1992; UNECE 1992; and Fischer 2002).

More recently the range of interpretations of SEA has become wider and the term '*impact*' has been replaced by terms such as '*effects*' (EC 1997); '*consequences*' (Partidario 2000); '*considerations*' (Thérivel 2004); '*concerns*' (Thérivel & Partidario 1996; Thissen 2000) and '*recognition*' (Van der Vorst 1999) (Bina 2001). Furthermore, the concepts of sustainable development and sustainability have begun to appear in later definitions, for example, DEAT (2000) defines SEA as "*integrating the concept of sustainable development into strategic decision-making*", and Fischer (2002) states that SEA is a decision-making tool for sustainable development<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> Sustainability within this context relates to the maintenance and enhancement of environmental, social and economic resources, in order to meet the needs of current and future generations. The three components of sustainability are environmental sustainability (requires that the natural capital remains intact), social sustainability (requires that the cohesion of society and its ability to work towards common goals be maintained) and economic sustainability (occurs when development, which moves towards social and economic sustainability, is financially feasible) (DEAT 2000).

Although various approaches and definitions are employed, most SEA practitioners agree that conceptually, SEA is a structured, proactive process to strengthen consideration of environmental issues and sustainability in strategic decision-making (Verheem & Tonk 1998; Thériverel 2004).

It is this quality that makes SEA a potentially useful tool to be incorporated into the IDP process. As discussed in chapter two, IDP is seen as the primary instrument that informs and guides all strategic planning and development in a municipality. Furthermore, IDPs are a key tool for achieving sustainability in municipalities (DEAT 2003). Sowman (2002) however, points out that the integration of environmental issues (and hence sustainability) into the IDP process is one of the most difficult challenges faced by municipalities. Todes (2003) reiterates this by pointing out that while the IDP does provide a useful vehicle for formulating plans based on sustainability principles, stronger guidance is needed on environmental issues. This sentiment is echoed by other authors for example, Urquhart & Atkinson (2000), Coetzee (2002), Harrison (2002), and Luckin (2003).

The integration of SEA and planning has been at the forefront of debate since the inception of SEA in South Africa (DEAT 2000; Rossouw *et al.*, 2000; Smit 2000). With the introduction of IDP to local government, SEA was immediately identified as an ideal tool that could assist IDPs to achieve the aim of facilitating sustainable development (Rossouw & Retief 2004). Notably, the CSIR (2003) identified the strategic function of SEA; that is, its use to guide broad level thinking about scope and opportunities for development in particular contexts. The characteristics that define its strategic nature are outlined in Box 3.1.

### **Box 3.1. What makes SEA strategic?**

*(Source: CSIR 1996; DEAT 2000; Noble 2000 and CSIR 2003b)*

#### **1. SEA emphasises strategy**

The strategic component is the set of principles and objectives that shape the visions and development intentions incorporated in policies, plans and programmes. SEA is a process or means that lead to a strategic for action.

#### **2. SEA is set within the context of broader visions, goals and objectives**

SEA defines a vision of the desirable future. Once a vision is articulated, goals and objectives are defined and alternative means of achieving these goals and objectives are evaluated. The goals, objectives and the alternatives are the means to the end (the end being the desired future).

*3. SEA asks the question: what is the preferred option? (i.e. SEA is proactive)*

SEA reflects a proactive approach. SEA acts in anticipation of future problems, needs, or challenges and creates and examines alternatives leading to a preferred option. In other words, a proactive approach is one that identifies alternatives (desired ends) and seeks the preferred option among a variety of alternative options to reach the most desired end.

*4. Broad-brush and non-technical*

SEA is not project-specific; the focus is on identifying alternative options and opportunities for regions and sectors rather than on identifying the potential outcomes of options to a predetermined alternative. The scope of SEA will differ depending on the level of application but it is typically more broad-brush than project-level assessment.

The variety of definitions and approaches to SEA however, are a source of confusion; SEA can be conceived and interpreted in different ways. As a result, it is debateable whether SEA can be defined and elaborated precisely enough to be a useful tool at the local government level. For instance, one needs to acknowledge that there may be practical problems with undertaking SEAs, given its vague and abstract characterisation in the literature. Verheem & Tonk (2000) sum this as *“any confusion, therefore, may create an impediment to the acceptance and introduction of SEA in situations in which currently no obligation to do so exists. What people do not know, they do not like”*. Furthermore, as resources at many local municipalities are constrained, often the most simple, and inexpensive techniques will be employed.

Due to the different ways in which SEA can be defined and applied, SEA experts world-wide have attempted to clarify, a clear set of principles that underlies all forms of ‘best-practice’ SEA (Verheem & Tonk 2000). In the next section I will focus on the content of these principles. The purpose here is to ‘unpack’ them in order to see more clearly, where, how and if SEA can be applied to IDP.

### **3.5. SEA PRINCIPLES**

The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) has developed a set of ‘performance criteria’ for SEA. These criteria were developed by Rob Verheem from the Netherlands SEA Commission, in consultation with members of the IAIA SEA Section. Discussions at workshops held in 1998, 1999 and 2000 at IAIA Annual Conferences assisted with the formulation of the criteria. These SEA criteria were endorsed by the IAIA Board of Directors in November 2001.

The full list of criteria was published by IAIA in the document entitled: *Strategic Environmental Assessment: Performance Criteria: Special Publication Series No. 1, January 2002*. In summary, a good-quality SEA process is supposed to be (DEAT 2004b):

- *Integrated* (addresses the interrelationships of biophysical, social and economic aspects);
- *Sustainability-led* (facilitates the identification of development options that will not harm the environment, however, will improve biophysical and socio-economic conditions in the long term);
- *Focused* (concentrates on identifying critical biophysical and socio-economic factors governed by the particular context in which development planning will take place);
- *Accountable* (is subject to independent checks and documents how sustainability issues were taken into account in decision-making);
- *Participative* (informs and involves government bodies and interested and affected public throughout the decision-making process); and
- *Iterative* (ensures that the results of the assessment are available early enough to influence decision-making and planning of development strategies and programmes).

Prior to the publication of the internationally accepted IAIA principles, DEAT in South Africa produced its own set of principles for SEA (DEAT 2000). These principles are set within the context of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act 107 of 1998). (The NEMA principles are discussed in Appendix two). A summary of the DEAT principles are listed below and discussed in greater detail in the subsequent section:

- SEA is driven by the concept of sustainability;
- SEA identifies the opportunities and constraints which the environment places on the development of plans and programmes;
- SEA sets the levels of environmental quality or limits of acceptable change;
- SEA is a flexible process which is adaptable to the planning and sectoral development cycle;
- SEA is a strategic process, which begins with the conceptualisation of the plan or programme;

- SEA is part of a tiered approach to environmental assessment and management;
- The scope of an SEA is defined within the wider context of environmental processes;
- SEA is a participative process;
- SEA is set within the context of alternative scenarios; and
- SEA includes the concepts of precaution and continuous improvement.

### **3.5.1. Substantive/Content Principles**

This section focuses on the substantive principles of SEA, that is, the content of an SEA. A defining principle of SEA is the integration of the concept of sustainability into plans and programmes. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2000) states that sustainability objectives are applicable to the level, scale and sector of the plan or programme, as well as the environmental resources to be sustained. The sustainability objectives should be developed with the participation of interested and affected parties. In other words sustainability is the core focus of SEA. However, the meaning is expressed by outlining environmental resources to be sustained.

'Resources' refer to the natural or built features of the environment, including goods and services, which have the potential to enhance social well-being. The term 'opportunities and constraints', refer to the features and systems of the natural or built environment which affect development, either positively or negatively. Resource opportunities depend on the availability and quality of natural, built and cultural or human resources in the area. The CSIR (2001b) has defined resource constraints as limitations associated with:

- The total available non-renewable resources, for example mineral resources and soils;
- The rate of replenishment of renewable resources such as catchment water resources; and
- Requirements for the sustainable functioning of ecological and social systems, for example the minimum viable size of protected ecosystems or the equitable distribution of services to rural and urban communities.

In focussing on resource opportunities and constraints, SEA seeks to direct attention to understanding the thresholds for damage to the environment and limits of particular forms of development (Thérivel 2004). This in essence, encapsulates the idea of limits of acceptable change and carrying capacity.

Thérivel *et al.*, (1992) earlier advocated the concept of 'carrying capacity' as the core means to express these thresholds and limits. However, this approach does not acknowledge the complex and changing nature of ecosystems. In other words, it presumes that there are fixed limits. Often there is limited information available to make these decisions. Furthermore, these decisions sometimes rely on value judgements that are not based in conclusive scientific evidence. Nonetheless, the underlying purpose of this approach is to encourage caution in development planning; that is, to consider potential damage to the environment (DEAT 2000; Thérivel 2004).

### **3.5.2. Procedural principles**

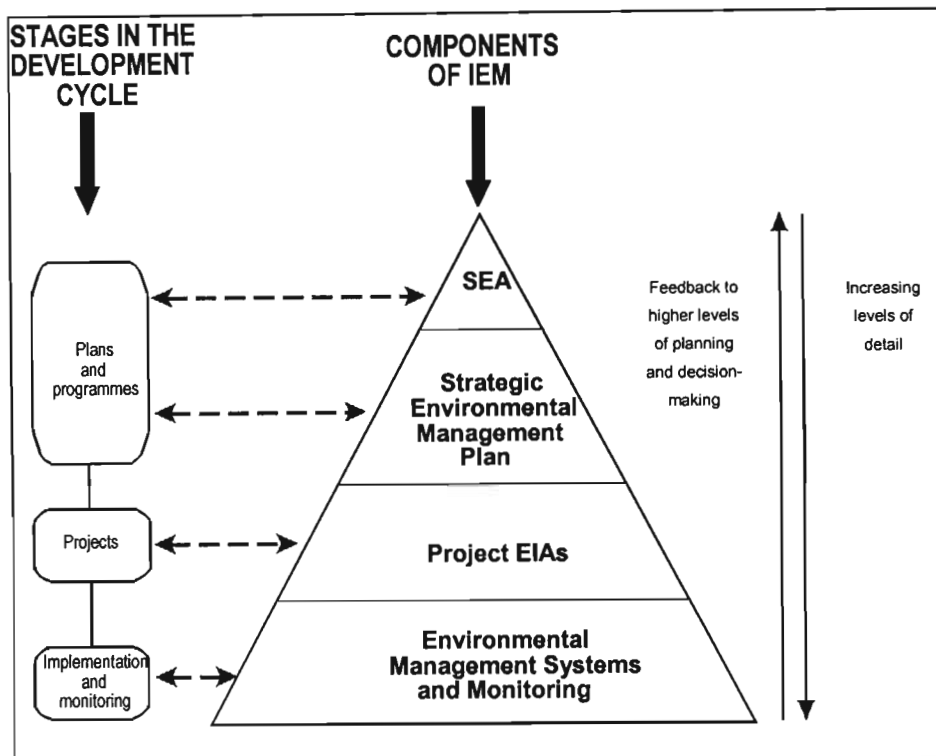
The expressed need for caution is set out in procedural principles. These relate to the SEA procedure, that is, how an SEA should be undertaken.

Firstly SEA is supposed to be a strategic process, which begins with the conceptualisation of the plan or programme. The strategic nature of SEA is a function of how it is applied, its outcomes and interactions with the decision-making processes (as outlined in Box 3.1).

Secondly, SEA is supposed to be a flexible process which is adaptable to the planning and sectoral development cycle. This principle states that SEA is flexible and can therefore be integrated into plan or programme processes. This principle has come under criticism from various authors, for example, CSIR (2001b) states that "*the flexibility of SEA can leave the process open to abuse as there is little guidance for quality control and uniformity, possibly one of the biggest barriers to SEA*".

Thirdly, SEA is part of a tiered approach to environmental assessment and management. Strategic Environmental Assessment addresses higher levels of decision-making in order to provide the context for lower levels (DEAT 2000).

Partidario (1999) stated that for SEA to be strategic, SEA must take place at the highest level of the plan and programme process. These plans and programmes are frequently referred to as being in a 'nested' or 'tiered' relationship with one another, with the policies preceding the programme, the programme the plan and the plan the project, at which EIA is applied (Figure 3.1). The tiering is important to avoid the need to consider the assessments of the various tiers at the same level.



**Figure 3.1. The tiered approach to Environmental Assessment (DEAT 2000)**

Fourthly, the scope of SEA is defined within the wider context of environmental processes, that is, SEA is not limited to a particular site but considers significant local, regional, national and internal linkages. Here the concept of cumulative effects is drawn into the SEA, where the spatial scale that should be looked at is the local, regional or global, whilst the frequency of an impact or temporal scale includes past, present and future impacts on a specific environment or region (DEAT 2004b).

While SEA is designed to imbue 'strategic thinking' amongst planners, it also demands participation. Public involvement is widely considered to be integral to SEA (Sadler & Verheem 1996). This is because it is usually the proponent that commissions an SEA study and there is therefore, a need for procedural "checks and balances to ensure that

the process is properly applied and to maintain public confidence in its integrity" (Sadler & Verheem 1996; Wallington 2002). Sadler & Verheem (1996) states that public involvement is considered to be the best mechanism to reduce and/or avoid bureaucratic, and technocratic distortion, and is therefore "the litmus test of the utility and effectiveness of SEA" (Wallington 2002).

Wallington (2002) argues that there are many problems associated with respect to defining the role of the public at higher decision-levels as the issues are often complex and the study area large, as opposed to EIA which is focused on a single development. A similar problem exists with public participation within IDP, as the issues are strategic in nature and one has to remove oneself from the problems of the 'here and now' and focus on the long term sustainable development of the municipality.

Woods (1988) states that most critical aspect of public participation is ensuring participants are representative. DEAT (2000) proposes that stakeholders be divided into key stakeholders and general stakeholders. Key stakeholders play a co-ordinating role, for example, through a steering committee. This committee could include authorities, specialists, non-governmental organisations, business and community organisations. The involvement of general stakeholders could range from being informed of the process, to providing inputs or to being actively involved in influencing the process. Furthermore, the public participation should be designed in such a way that it enhances the process.

Finally, SEA is supposed to consider alternative scenarios. Within the SEA, scenarios, visions and alternative plans and programme options should be developed. These alternative plans and programmes should be evaluated in terms of their ability to maintain and enhance the environmental resources identified (DEAT 2000).

While the principles are generally similar, they have been interpreted differently. Consequently, there are a number of different approaches to SEA and a single method cannot be prescribed. In the next section, I outline some of the SEA approaches that are applied.

### 3.6. SEA APPROACHES

Various SEA procedures have been developed internationally, which have their own specific strengths in a particular context (DEAT 2004b, CSIR 2003a). Each of these approaches is discussed briefly below:

#### ***3.6.1.1 EIA based approach***

One approach to SEA involves the extension of EIA procedures to the strategy-level of decision-making. In other words, this approach asserts that the EIA procedures are as applicable for design of strategies and programmes as for projects (Thérivel *et al.*, 1992; Sadler 2001). This type of SEA has been categorised as an EIA-based approach and typically includes the following stages (Sadler 2001):

- Screening (to initiate the SEA and identify the likely scope of the review needed);
- Scoping (to identify the key issues and alternatives, clarify objectives and to develop terms of reference for SEA);
- The identification and evaluation of alternatives strategies and programmes (compare alternatives including no action options, and possible 'trade-offs' that could be made);
- The involvement of the public at an early stage in the process and ensure that the public is given sufficient information to participate in the process);
- The identification of mitigation and follow-up measures (to examine effects or issues that relate to sustainable development, evaluate alternatives and suggest measures to alleviate or enhance the development plan such that whilst socio-economic conditions are improved, the biophysical environment is protected);
- The documentation of the SEA (document the findings, supporting advice, recommendations and conditions for implementation);
- Review of the SEA report (review the quality of the SEA report to ensure that it is clear and concise and the information is sufficient and relevant to the decision-makers); and
- Carry out follow-up measures as necessary to monitor effects and check on implementation of the strategy and/or programme.

### ***3.6.1.2 The formulation of a sustainability framework***

This approach emphasises the concept of sustainability. For instance, the South African DEAT guideline document (DEAT 2000) states that “SEA is driven by the concept of sustainability”, and more specifically “the focus of SEA is on integrating the concept of sustainability into the objectives and outcomes of plans and programmes”. The process to achieve this aim is illustrated in Figure 3.1 and summarised (DEAT 2000, CSIR 2003b) as :

- Identify a broad plan or programme alternatives (This initiates the physical and administrative boundaries, the level of planning and the type of plan or programme to be undertaken).
- Screening (involves identifying the overarching purpose of the plan or programme and deciding whether an SEA is required).
- Scoping (includes the articulation of a vision (which expresses broadly what the plan or programme is trying to achieve), and the identification of strategic issues that should be addressed in the SEA);
- A situation assessment (This stage involves the identification of social, economic, and biophysical resources that should be maintained and/or enhanced, as well as trends, institutions, legislation and other factors that influence the maintenance and enhancement of these resources);
- The formulation of parameters or guidelines to guide the development and assessment of plans and programmes;
- The adjustment of plans and programmes in terms of the assessment; and
- The formulation of a plan for monitoring and auditing.

### ***3.6.1.3 Integration of the SEA approach with existing planning procedures***

This approach views SEA as a set of procedures that can be incorporated into existing planning procedures to the benefit of the latter. For example the Guidelines for implementing the Cabinet Directive on SEA in Canada (CEAA 1999) state that a separate SEA process and reporting is not required, but the SEA should be integrated as far as possible into existing reporting procedures. The South African SEA guideline document also states that SEA should not be separate to the development planning process but rather integrated into it (DEAT 2000).

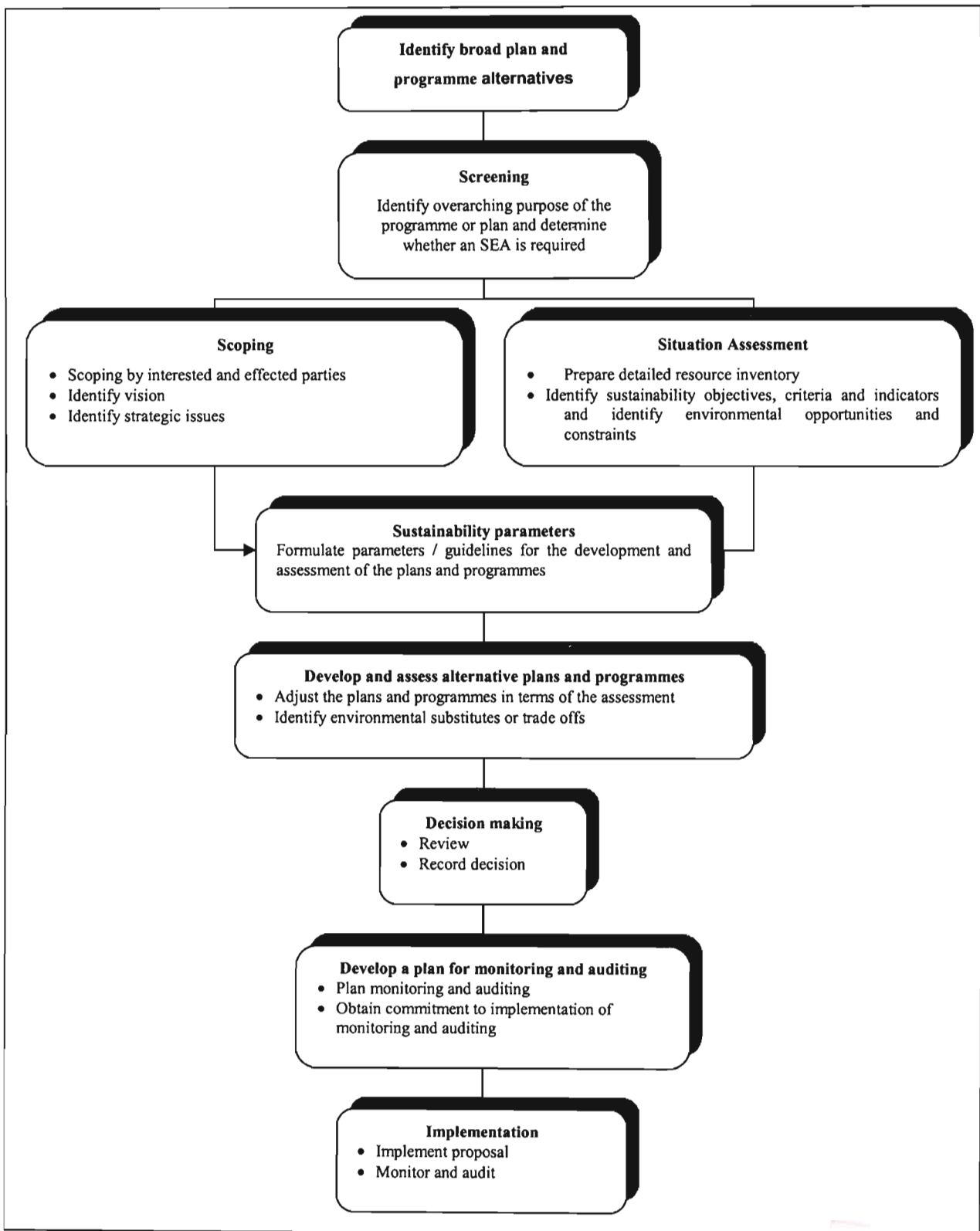


Figure 3.2. The SEA process (DEAT 2000)

#### **3.6.1.4 The nature and level of decision-making**

This approach to SEA is specific for the Netherlands where the SEA system is a two-tier system that requires an EIA-based approach SEA for various plans, programmes and sectoral policies in terms of their EIA Act. The second approach is unique in that consists of a set of four questions. This approach is referred to as the E-test (environmental test) and was developed to assist in the design of new legislation. The E-test is required for all policies that are submitted to the Cabinet that are not otherwise subject to an environmental assessment. The questions relate to the effects of the policy on waste and on emissions to air, soil and surface water, on the use of physical space, on energy consumption and the mobility and consumption of raw materials (CSIR 2004b).

### **3.7. PROBLEMS AND SHORTCOMINGS OF SEA**

Recently SEA has been dominating the international environmental assessment arena, discussions on SEA however, focus on the potential achievements of SEA rather than on what SEA can actually achieve. Strategic Environmental Assessment practitioners and experts have placed much emphasis on SEA, and on what SEA should achieve that SEA supporters may have merely created false expectations. This has resulted in unnecessary pressure on this tool to respond to an increasingly diverse array of requirements (Govender *per obs*). This sentiment is reflected by statements made by Flynn *et al.*, (1999) stating that “SEA has always raised the intriguing prospect of integrating the environment into higher levels of decision-making”. However, “by failing to be sufficiently cognisant of the political imperatives that marginalise the environment and seeking to impose an external and spurious technical rationality on the process, SEA may itself become discredited”. This is a key point as the concerns allude to how SEA can actually ‘integrate environment into higher levels of decision-making’.

Another issue of concern is a lack of standard methodology for SEA. While general principles and basic steps of SEA preparation are known to many, there is much less agreement on what tools should be used and what the final outputs of SEA are. Furthermore, the South Africa guideline on SEA (DEAT 2000) does not propose a ‘step-by-step’ process for SEA but rather focuses on key principles. These principles can be interpreted differently. The guideline document also states that SEA should not

be separate from the development planning process but rather integrated into it. Several authors have highlighted the importance of 'integrating' SEA in decision-making processes; see for example in Table 3.1 (Sadler 1996; Clark 2000; Partidario 2000; DEAT 2000 and Thérivel 2004). The assumption is that greater integration between the two processes will increase SEAs acceptability and enhance its effectiveness.

There are a number of reasons for the current confusion regarding SEAs. Fischer (2002) provides a summary of this, which I outline below.

There seems to be uncertainty about whether SEA should act as a developed instrument for decision-making for sustainable development or whether it should remain an advocate assessment instrument for the natural environment. Within the context of sustainable development, SEA has been promoted as a tool that should give equal consideration to the environmental, social and economic impacts, however, in practice SEA seems to focus its attention on the natural environment (Govender *per obs*).

Another uncertainty is the manner in which SEA is applied. As I highlighted earlier various approaches exist for SEA e.g. the EIA based approach as compared to the integration approach. It is uncertain as to whether a more rigorous approach is required that allows SEA to be applied in a more rational manner, or whether SEA should be flexible as suggested in the DEAT SEA guideline (DEAT 2000).

Given the current confusion regarding the definition of SEA, how SEA should be applied as well as how SEA principles are interpreted, a further complication is that there are many similar environmental assessment instruments with similar goals and objectives to SEA. These include: strategic environmental appraisal; strategic environmental analysis; territorial impact assessment; sustainability assessment; strategic impact assessment; environmental appraisal and others. There is also a perception that SEA is a technical assessment framework similar to a number of other frameworks e.g. cost benefit analysis and computer modelling.

Finally, there seems to be a lack of empirical reason in literature. This suggests that SEA is considered at a more theoretical than a practical level. This reiterates the

earlier point that discussions on SEAS focus on the potential achievements of SEA rather than on what SEA can actually achieve.

Marsden (2002) states that approaches to SEA need to take account of the context in which they operate, for example social, political, environmental, economic, legal and administrative, as SEA is likely to be accepted where it is prepared to adapt. This is also reflected in the DEAT SEA guidelines document which advocates that a key element of SEA is that it remains flexible; therefore it has been argued that the SEA process cannot be standardised like that exists for EIA. This decision could be construed as a shortcoming to SEA, and has come under criticism (CSIR 2001b).

Furthermore, a review conducted by Marsden (2002) it has been found that evidence of SEA actually having changed the pattern of decision-making is not always easy to find. In this review he questions the rationality of decisions made with regard to SEA. It is assumed that the provision of rational information will help improve decision-making; however, several authors contest this. Kornov & Thissen (2000), however, maintain that much of the SEA literature is based on the rational comprehensive model, with its assumption that the provision of rational information will improve decision-making and will therefore improve the prospects of a better result for the environment.

### **3.8. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has outlined the definitions, approaches, principles and problems of SEA. Early definitions of SEA focus on environmental impacts at a broader level, that is, not to projects but rather to plans and programmes, and more recent definitions of SEA have included the concepts of sustainable development. The different interpretations of SEA have led to SEA appearing more like an unidentified concept than a clear and effective planning tool. These in part lend itself to some of the confusion surrounding SEA and more specifically, where and how SEA should be used. The common thread in the more recent definitions of SEA is the concept of sustainable development and most SEA practitioners agree that conceptually SEA is a structured, proactive process to strengthen consideration of environmental issues and sustainability in strategic decision-making. It is this quality that makes SEA a potentially useful tool for the formulation of IDPs.

A key concern however, is that these claims of SEA strengthening sustainability considerations in strategic decision-making are based on a theoretical definitions of the tool rather than on empirical reason. Therefore, translation of the potential 'theoretical' achievements of SEA may prove difficult in practical application of the tool. Furthermore, the actual implementation of sustainable development may be problematic. As highlighted earlier, in theory sustainability requires a proactive approach that encompasses a wide range of human activities and environmental factors linked to an economic system. Strategic Environmental Assessment case studies reveal that there is a strong bias towards the environmental issues.

In conclusion, this section has presented SEA as a tool that in principle could ensure coherent and concrete expression of the notion of sustainable development in IDPs; however, problems exist with SEA and therefore its application. These include:

- A standard methodology for SEA in South Africa is lacking;
- Strategic Environmental Assessment as promoted in the DEAT SEA guideline document is founded on a 'principle-based' approach and whilst there may be agreement on the principles, interpretations of these principles differ;
- The DEAT guideline document also advocates that a key element of SEA is that it should remain flexible, this has come under severe criticism;
- Another key principle of SEA is that of sustainable development, however, much of the international literature as well as the South Africa guideline document focus more attention of the biophysical environment, thus, there is uncertainty about whether SEA is a decision-making tool for sustainable development, or whether it is an assessment tool for the biophysical environment.

Nonetheless, in summary, the concept of SEA can be vague and abstract, and SEA as a tool is still evolving. The SEA principles remain constant and therefore can be incorporated into IDP. Ensuring that these principles are met within the IDP process can assist with the formulation and review of IDP. The application of SEA within the planning context does hold the promise of ensuring that environmental and sustainability considerations are achieved.

## CHAPTER 4: SEA AND IDP IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to explore SEA and IDP in South Africa and suggest models for the integration of SEA principles and approaches into the IDP process. As suggested in the previous chapters, in principle, SEA could add value and enhance the IDP process, and ensure that sustainability is considered in the formulation of IDPs.

As highlighted earlier, SEA was introduced to South Africa in the form of a guideline document published by DEAT in 2000. The introduction of SEA has since culminated in the development of SEA guidance as well as framework legislation (See Box 4.1) (Rossouw & Retief 2004). However, the formal adoption of SEA has been relatively slow in South Africa as compared with other countries. Mention is made of SEA in the framework legislation (Box 4.3) however; there is a lack of clarity on how the tool should be applied.

#### Box 4.1. SEA guidance and legislation in South Africa

##### SEA guidance

- South African SEA guidelines document (DEAT 2000)
- A guide to SEA for water use in catchments (DWAF 2001)
- SEA guidelines for the coastal countries of eastern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Island States (CSIR 2003b)

##### SEA framework legislation

- National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act 107 of 1998)
- Local Government: Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations (2001)
- National Environmental Management Act: Second Amendment Bill (2002)
- Land Use Bill (2002)

Wiseman (2000) previously had highlighted five issues that posed a hindrance to SEA being a widely accepted and perhaps being formally adopted in South Africa. These included:

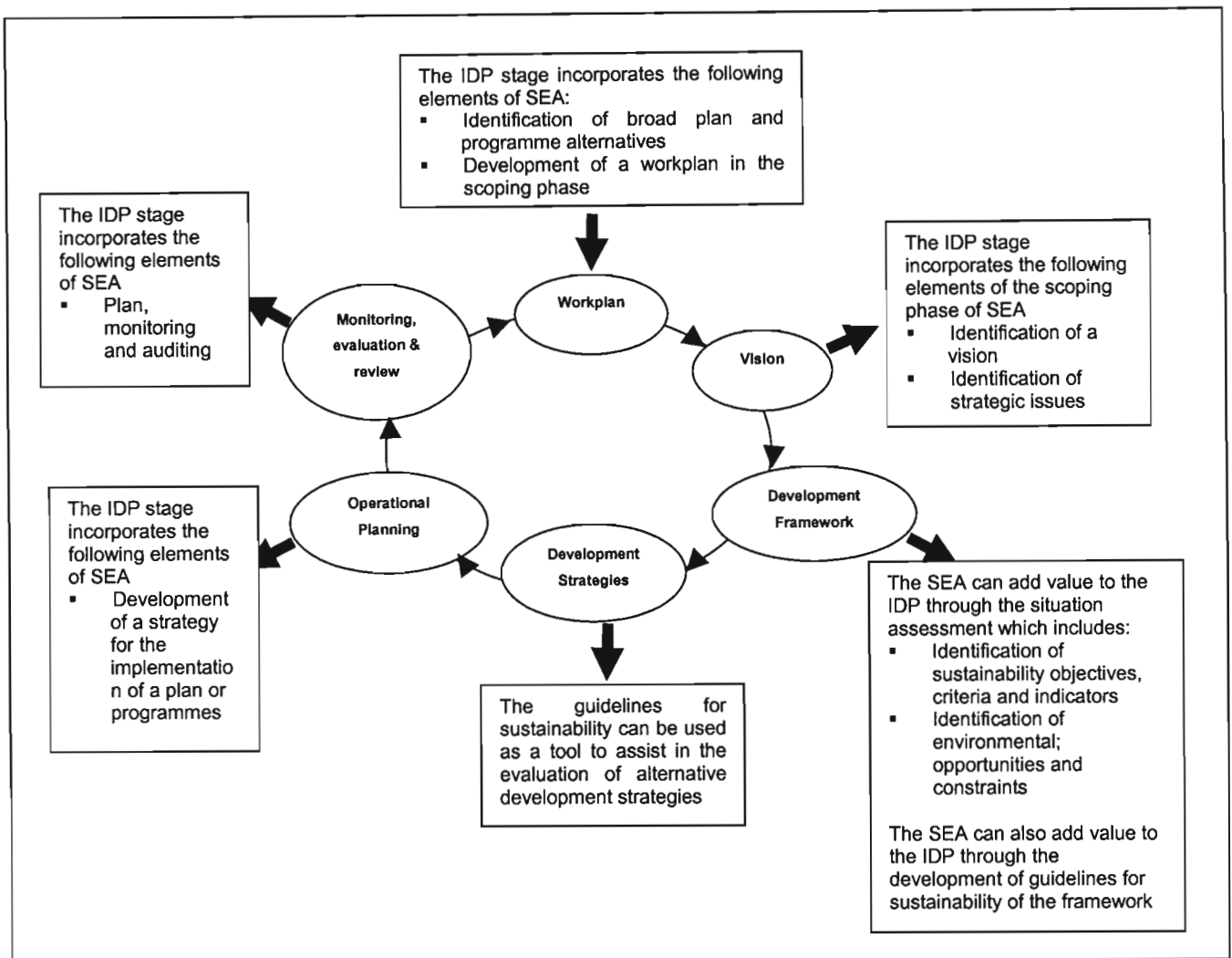
- There is a lack of screening mechanisms to determine if SEA is needed;
- SEA can take on different forms since no agreed approach exists;
- There are no legal requirements to ensure that the results or recommendations of an SEA are adopted and incorporated into plans and programmes;

- There is inadequate information on environmental issues, including a lack of baseline data and a lack of established tools to ensure that opportunities and constraints created by the environment are addressed in detailed planning and decision-making; and
- Lack of strategic direction from authorities.

A recent survey conducted by Retief *et al.*, 2004 identified fifty SEA (and SEA-type) case studies conducted in South Africa between 1996 and 2003. The authors highlighted the extent and variety of SEA practice in South Africa. Furthermore, they state that a number of these SEAs were linked to some extent to planning and were perceived as advantageous to decision-making processes. In other words, their conclusion was that the SEA must be working. In the following section, the application of SEA to IDP is considered.

#### **4.2. SEA APPROACH FOR IDP**

The DEAT (2000) guideline states that SEA should not be separate to the IDP process but rather integrated into it. The guide states SEA can add value by providing the means of integrating the concept of sustainability into planning. Furthermore, it states that within the SEA process, limits of acceptable change are defined, which indicate the ability of the environment to sustain development. These limits can then be used as a guide in planning to ensure that development does not degrade or deplete environmental resources. Moreover, SEA identifies resource opportunities that can be enhanced through appropriate planning. The purpose of SEA therefore, as stated in the guideline is to complement the planning process, by providing the information necessary to ensure that development maintains and enhances environmental resources. An example of how SEA may be integrated with the IDP process is provided in Figure 5.1. It must be noted however, that this guideline was published pre-IDP legislation and therefore the phases and terminology differs from that described in chapters two and three.



**Figure 4.1. Integrating the IDP process and elements of SEA**

For SEA to become widely established within the planning domain in South Africa the integration of both the SEA approach as well as the principles with IDP still needs to be refined. This is based on Rossouw & Govender's (2003) contention that to facilitate meaningful linkages between SEA and IDP, integration needs to occur at three levels.

These levels are:

- Policy integration

There are key policies requiring strategic development and environmental plans, to facilitate sustainability. For example, the Development Facilitation Act (RSA 1995) makes provision for strategic, integrated planning, which facilitates sustainable land development practices. The White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (RSA 2001), and the Municipal Planning and Performance

Management Regulations (RSA 2002) require municipalities to conduct an SEA of the spatial development framework. The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (RSA 1998) requires national and provincial departments to formulate Environmental Implementation Plans (EIP). The purpose of these plans is to coordinate the programmes and plans of the national departments who perform functions which may affect the environment. The EIPs also indicate how the plans and programmes comply with sustainability principles.

- Institutional integration

Currently there are national initiatives, with the objectives of improving integration and sustainability in the development planning process. The objectives include capacity building and increased co-ordination among all spheres of government and within municipal structures.

- Methodological integration

It is the intention that SEA should not be separate to the development planning process but rather integrated into it. This is accomplished by identifying elements of SEA, which will add value to the planning process.

The integration of planning and environmental management policy has been quite successful through the inclusion of common principles. For example sustainability and planning are emphasised in both planning legislation and in environmental management legislation and policy. However, institutional and methodological integration remains problematic (Rossouw & Retief 2004).

As highlighted in the previous chapter there is a lack of standard methodology for SEA. Therefore while principles of SEA are known to many, there is much less agreement on what the final outputs of an SEA should be. This presents a challenge for the integration of SEA into IDP.

Another issue, as highlighted by Fischer (2002) that relates to methodological integration is that the contexts themselves should change if SEA is to have the intended impact, for example current planning systems may not effectively address the 'right' issues at the 'right' time and they should be changed to enable SEA to help with these issues.

The IDP process is however, a legislated process in South Africa, whereas for SEA only broad guidelines exist. The chance of IDP changing to enhance the effectiveness of SEA is minimal to none. Furthermore, this lends itself to greater confusion on what SEA aims to be and to achieve. If the aim of SEA is to be integrated into planning to improve decision-making then it leads that SEA that must be adapted to the context within which it is applied.

Bina (2001) states that an interesting parallel between SEA and decision-making theory can be found in the steps and stages used to support certain rational interpretation of the nature of decision-making processes. SEA approaches seem to be strongly aligned with the 'classic model of rational decision' and problem solving of the 1940s and 1950s where if faced with a problem, a rational man first clarifies his goals, values, or objectives and then ranks or organises them in his mind. He then lists all important possible ways of / policies for achieving his goals. All important consequences that would follow from each of the alternative policies are then investigated, which lead him to a position where he is able to compare the consequences of each policy with goals. Finally, he chooses the policy with consequences most closely matching his goals.

This rational approach defined by Bina (2001) is typically what the IDP process is about. If fundamental principles guiding these processes are so similar, a critical question to be asked is, is there actually a need for SEA? Are we SEA practitioners forcing the concept of SEA into the planning domain arguing that SEA is the tool that will assist us on the pathway to sustainable development?

Chapter two reflects, however, that major shortcomings do exist with the IDP process. To re-iterate IDP seems to have a strong focus on economic growth and promoting social justice, however, the principles of ecological sustainability and a concern for the future and linking to global dimensions were lacking. If we apply Thérivel's (2004) statement "*SEA is a process that aims to integrate environmental and sustainability considerations in strategic decision-making*", then perhaps there is some value if considering the use of SEA to meet the gaps experienced in the planning process. In principle, SEA can effectively act as a rather 'radical' assessment process, placing environmental protection on the political agenda, ensuring that environmentally sound alternatives are at least given full consideration, and raising the overall level of

transparency and accountability, as envisaged in the 'Principles of Environmental Impact Assessment' of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA 2000).

Despite the above there are political and administrative barriers as well as the planning and assessment cultures that characterise how SEA operates and the attention it is given. Rossouw & Retief (2004) highlight that assessment techniques for use in local government need to be simple and inexpensive. The danger for SEA, is that it might be perceived as an expensive and highly specialised add on to the already complex and extensive IDP requirements. Strategic Environmental Assessment is only likely to be 'as good as the political systems that promote it' (O'Riordan 2001). Furthermore, in South Africa, SEA is yet to reach the level of EIA development, although there are some indications that this may be occurring in the future (Weaver *pers. comm.*).

A means to integrate SEA and IDP, in principle is illustrated in Figure 4.2 and is explained in detail below. This approach was tested in the uMhlathuze Municipality SEA and IDP process and is discussed in the next chapter. Once this case study has been analysed conclusions will be drawn to determine whether SEA can be incorporated into IDP.

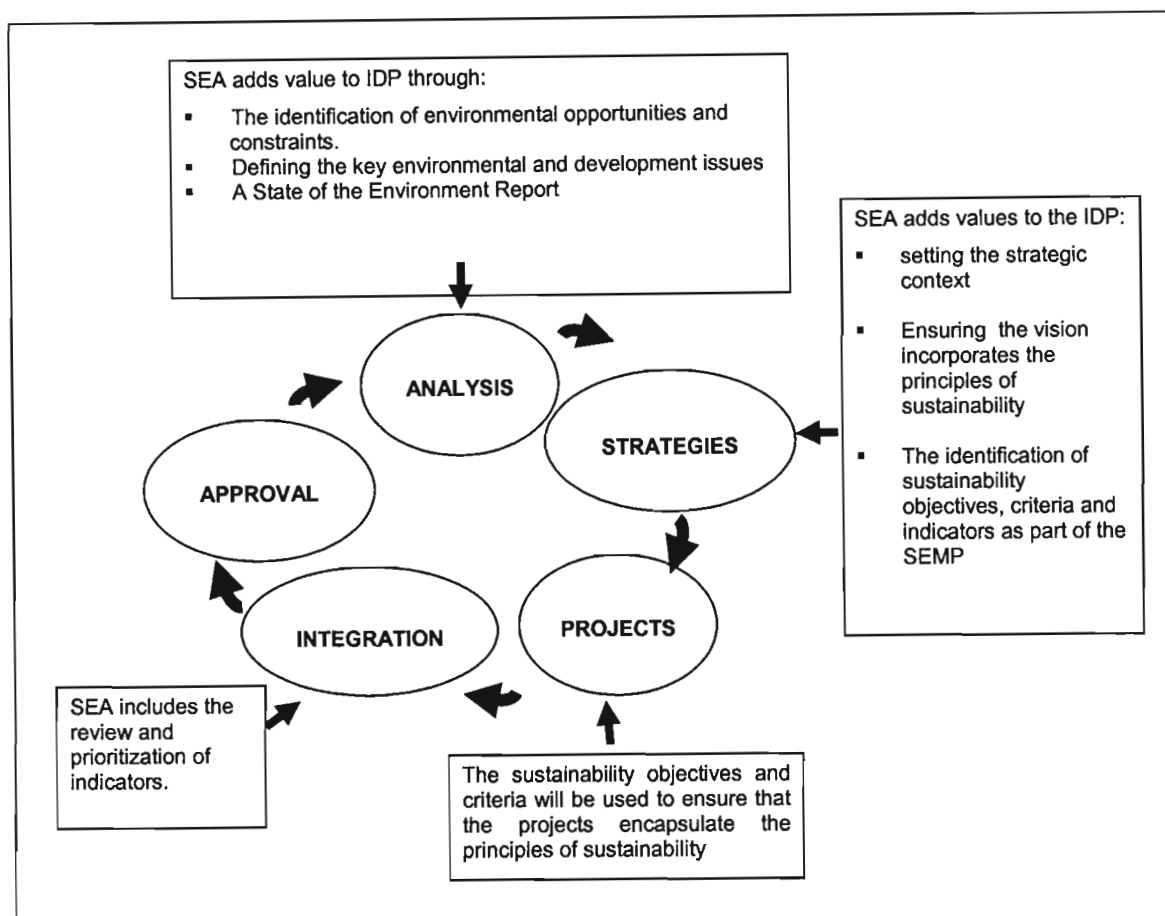
#### **4.2.1. The analysis phase of the IDP**

Within this phase of the IDP, the objective of the SEA is to provide a situational assessment of the current condition within the Municipal area. Furthermore, resource opportunities and constraints as well as strategic issues for sustainable development need to be identified. This information needs to be integrated into a State of the Environment Report (SoE). This SoE report can enhance or be written up as the analysis report for the IDP.

#### **4.2.2. The strategies phase of the IDP**

In this phase within the IDP process a vision for the municipality is formulated as well as development objectives and strategies. SEA can add value by ensuring that a strategic context is defined on a working vision for sustainable development within the

Municipality. The SEA should identify objectives, criteria and indicators for sustainable development. Furthermore, the SEA should consider limits of acceptable change and levels of environmental quality that will determine why particular strategies should be chosen (DEAT 2000).



**Figure 4.2. Integrating SEA and IDP in theory**

### 4.2.3. The project phase of the IDP

Phase three of the IDP is about the design and specification of projects for implementation. These include the allocation of resources (financial and human) for successful implementation. The sustainability objectives, criteria and indicators identified during the strategies phase can be used to screen the projects to ensure that they encapsulate the principles of sustainable development. They should also consider alternatives and evaluate these alternatives in terms of their ability to maintain and enhance the environmental resources identified. Furthermore, indicators for

ongoing planning, assessment and management of the activities in the Municipality must be determined. Within this phase environmental projects must also be prioritised and captured within the IDP priority list (CSIR 2002).

#### **4.2.4. The integration phase of the IDP**

This phase ensures that the projects that have been identified are aligned with the objectives and strategies defined in Phase two of the process. During this phase various integrated programmes are also developed. The SEA can contribute to this phase of the IDP by reviewing and prioritising the indicators that will be adopted by the Municipality for ongoing assessment and monitoring. Furthermore, the SEA should contribute to the development of the various integrated programmes, where the SEA is supposed to provide the baseline environmental data, resources opportunities and constraints that need to be enhanced and minimised respectively (CSIR 2002).

#### **4.2.5. The approval phase of the IDP**

The final phase in the preparation of the IDP is the completion and submission of the documents to Council for approval and adoption. The Council needs to ensure that the IDP is aligned with the legal requirements, the issues and problems have been identified and appropriate means to address them are provided. The SEA together with the IDP is then approved by the Council.

### **4.3. CONCLUSION**

This chapter explored SEA and IDP in South Africa, and proposed an SEA approach for IDP. As discussed in the previous chapter, there are a range of issues that pose a hindrance to SEA. Despite this, a recent survey (Retief *et al.*, 2004) highlighted the extent and variety of SEA practice in South Africa and concluded that SEA is advantageous to the decision-making process.

The DEAT SEA guideline document (DEAT 2000) advocates that SEA should be integrated into the IDP process. In order for SEA to be established within the planning

domain, integration needs to take place at three levels. These include, policy, institutional and methodological integration. Of these, institutional and methodological integration are the most problematic. However, at a conceptual framework level, SEA can be an important tool of analysis for development planning.

As highlighted in the previous chapter in theory SEAs applied to development planning should provide an overview of environmental opportunities and constraints for development within the limits of acceptable change, in order to ensure sustainable development. To meet these objectives, this chapter proposed a theoretical approach for the integration of SEA and IDP.

Having highlighted the key issues with regards to SEA and IDP including the problems related to integration, the results of this chapter will be used to assess the case study.

## **CHAPTER 5: AN ANALYSIS OF THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY IDP AND SEA PROCESS**

The aim of this chapter is to outline a case study as an attempt to combine SEA and IDP. The SEA and how it was included in the IDP process is described, and whether and how the SEA added value to the IDP and whether and how it had influenced decision-making will be determined. The purpose is to draw lessons to improve the formulation and review of future IDPs as well as SEA practice.

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY**

The uMhlathuze Municipality or as it is referred to as the 'City of uMhlathuze', is a local municipality situated within the uThungulu District Council area in KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix 3 for locality map). The uThungulu District Municipality consists of the following local municipalities (Demarcation Board 2004):

- KZ281 – Mbonambi;
- KZ282 – City of uMhlathuze;
- KZ283 – Ntambanana;
- KZ284 – Eshowe;
- KZ285 – Melmoth; and
- KZ286 – Nkandla

The jurisdictional area includes a large section of coastline on the east coast of South Africa between Durban in the South and Maputo (Mozambique) in the North. It includes a deep water harbour, the Port of Richards Bay, which is the closest port to the economic hinterland (Gauteng) of the country, connected via a railway line (Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR 2002).

The City of uMhlathuze was constituted from the former entities:

- Empangeni Transitional Local Council;
- Richards Bay Transitional Local Council; and
- Sections of the uThungulu Regional Council.

These former entities were constituted in 1995, after the first democratic national elections in 1994 and local government elections of 1995. Following the local government elections in December 2000, and the forming of wall-to-wall municipalities in South Africa, the entities described above amalgamated to form the uMhlathuze Municipality (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004).

Until the 1960's, Richards Bay was a small fishing village overlooking the Mhlathuze Estuary. With the Port of Richards Bay officially opening in 1976, Richards Bay and Empangeni have since grown considerably and have developed into bustling industrial and commercial nodes which are surrounded by extensive monoculture (sugarcane and commercial forestry) and rural or traditional settlements. Key industries that operate within the area include Billiton's Hillside and Bayside Aluminium smelters, the Richards Bay Coal Terminal, Mondi Kraft, Foskor, two wood chipping companies, Ticor and Richards Bay Minerals. Heavy industries favour this area as a result of the availability of land and the possible linkages to the Port (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004).

Although many question the sustainability of the establishment of the harbour in Richards Bay, planning for Richards Bay took heed of the importance of the environment to some extent (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004). The 'garden city' concept was implemented to establish residential areas, thereby creating large open spaces that link main land uses to each other, encouraging pedestrian movement in the city and acting as the "lungs" of the city<sup>5</sup>.

The Mhlathuze floodplain and a portion of the Mhlathuze Estuary were also retained as conservation areas. Furthermore, wetlands, various unique freshwater coastal lakes, a sensitive coastal zone, a high number of Red Data Book Species and a relatively high water table characterize the uMhlathuze Municipal area (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004).

Despite the initial 'garden city' concept planning, the growing demand for development resulted in many trade-offs being made, many of these in conflict with the natural environment. For example, large areas of grassland and natural forests have been

---

<sup>5</sup> English Town Planner, Sir Ebenezer Howard, founded the garden city movement. His *Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* published in 1898 and reissued as *Garden Cities of To-morrow* published in 1902, outlines a model of a self sustaining town that would combine town conveniences and industries with the advantages of an agricultural location (Howard 1902).

replaced by commercial forestry and in the surrounding sugarcane areas riparian vegetation has been impacted by cultivation right up to the stream banks (CSIR 2002).

The uMhlathuze Municipality consists of 30 wards with 60 councillors. The main administrative unit is in Richards Bay. The smaller decentralized locations have been retained to ensure that services are easily accessible to the people. The organizational chart (Appendix four) reflects the main entities and their functions with the administration. The Municipality is headed by the Municipal Manager and is divided into nine departments dealing with specific functions. Each of these departments is headed by Directors except for the City Secretary, City Engineer, City Electrical Engineer and the City Treasurer (Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR 2002).

In contrast to many local authorities that have severe financial problems the three former local authorities which now constitute the City of uMhlathuze were all in a financially sound position, prior to the amalgamation of these entities. Both the Empangeni and Richards Bay local authorities had a payment rate in excess of 95% on services as well as rates and taxes, which contributed to the healthy financial status of these entities. These entities received contributions from the uThungulu Regional Council on an equitable share basis, which constituted a considerable portion of their respective capital budgets (Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR 2002). Commissioning an SEA linked to their IDP process was therefore a luxury that this municipality, unlike others, could afford.

In other words this case reflects many of the conditions and challenges facing South African municipalities, though different in that they were financially secure.

## **5.2. BACKGROUND TO SEA WITHIN THE UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPAL AREA**

The City of uMhlathuze is unique in that its former entities were also afforded the luxury of conducting SEAs. It is important that mention is made of the previous SEA initiatives as this will help understand the mandate for the uMhlathuze Municipality SEA. The previous two SEAs are not analyzed within this study but are described

below merely to provide a context for the study. The focus of this dissertation is on the third SEA conducted for the uMhlathuze Municipality.

### **5.2.1. SEA for the Richards Bay Transitional Local Council**

In 1999, the Richards Bay TLC initiated a process to prepare a sectorally<sup>6</sup> based SEA, aimed at providing environmental information for strategic planning and decision-making for the potential future of industrial development of Richards Bay. The Richards Bay TLC appointed the CSIR to assist them in this process which was completed in 2000. (CSIR 2000). Despite this SEA being initiated prior to the publication of the DEAT guideline document (DEAT 2000), the SEA followed an approach similar to that described in the guideline document. The outcome of the SEA was knowledge intensive documents that had little influence on the planning and management of development within Richards Bay. A key criticism leveled against this SEA was that perhaps it was too strategic and lacked practical application and therefore was not utilized by the Municipality (van der Wateren *pers. comm.* & Govender *pers. obs.*). Whilst the SEA focused on defining sustainability for the Municipal area, there was no clear procedural guidelines or prioritization criteria to aid in the implementation of the SEA.

### **5.2.2. SEA for the Empangeni Transitional Local Council**

Following the completion of the Richards Bay SEA, the Empangeni TLC appointed the CSIR to complete an SEA for their jurisdiction. This process was completed in January 2001. The SEA approach followed by the Empangeni TLC was similar to that of Richards Bay. The key difference however, was that the SEA was commissioned on completion of their Local Development Plan (LDP) (as discussed earlier various forms of IDP were prepared prior to the promulgation of the Municipal Systems Act, RSA 2000). The main aim of the SEA was to ensure that the LDP adhered to the principles of sustainability. As such, the SEA ensured that environmental projects were identified as part of the LDP (CSIR 2001b). This SEA was closely linked to the planning

---

<sup>6</sup> The aim of this SEA was to provide environmental information for strategic planning and decision-making for the potential future of industrial development of Richards Bay. As it was focused only on industrial development, hence it was termed a sectoral SEA.

framework and links between SEA and planning were starting to become clearer. As the SEA was commissioned on completion of the LDP, the LDP has to be subsequently revised to incorporate the SEA. Logically it was surmised that in order to allow for effective integration of the two processes, as well as avoid the duplication of functions and to use the resources of local government optimally (Smit 2000), SEA should be commissioned with IDPs and integrated throughout the process (Govender, *per obs*).

### **5.2.3. SEA for the uMhlathuze Municipality**

Following the local government elections in December 2000 and the forming of wall-to-wall municipalities in South Africa, these municipalities were amalgamated into the uMhlathuze Municipality. The uMhlathuze Municipality recognized the need to expand the existing SEAs into an integrated process that included areas previously not assessed (that is, the rural and tribal areas). Furthermore, there was a requirement (The Municipal Systems Act, RSA 2000) of all local authorities to adopt a programme for the formulation of a comprehensive IDP. The uMhlathuze Municipality therefore initiated a process towards developing a comprehensive IDP. Together with the IDP process, the Municipality commissioned the CSIR to conduct an SEA for the uMhlathuze Municipal area. The SEA was commissioned as the Municipality felt that the SEA could be very valuable in ensuring that the principles of sustainable development are encompassed in the planning process, which will ultimately lead to a sustainable environment (social, biophysical and economic). Furthermore, it was envisaged that the SEA should not run parallel to the IDP process but rather in support of it (CSIR 2002).

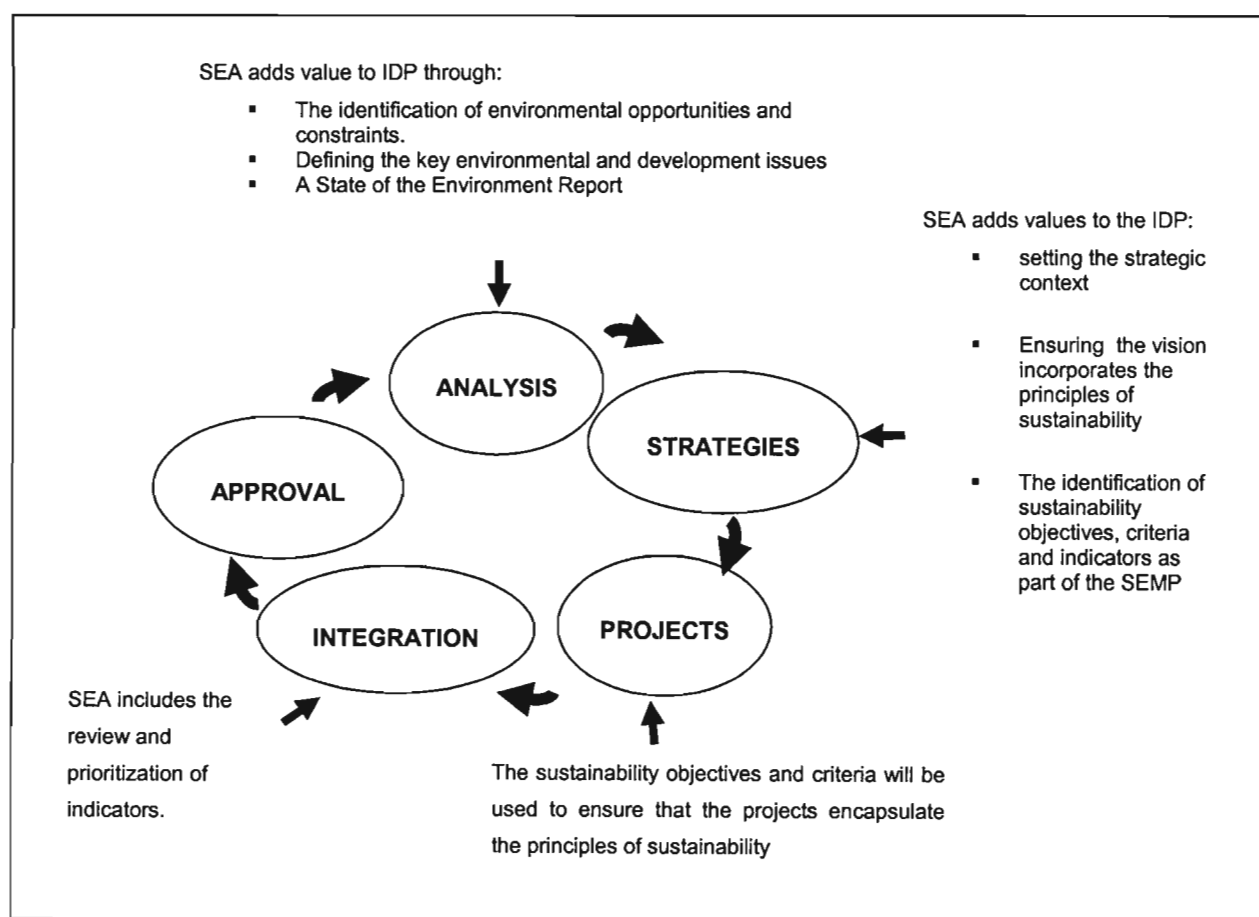
Moreover, the new Municipal structure during these early development stages did not have a department dedicated solely to dealing with environmental issues. The aim of the SEA was therefore to not only support the IDP but also (CSIR 2002):

*"...to provide the uMhlathuze Municipality with the necessary strategic tools to facilitate decision-making for sustainable development. The tools will assist in assessment, management and monitoring for sustainable development".*

This aim was supported with the following objectives (CSIR 2002):

- To understand the “vision” for sustainable development in the uMhlathuze Municipality;
- To identify environmental opportunities and constraints to development within the Municipality and in particular the rural areas;
- To provide reliable and updateable information to facilitate environmentally sustainable development in the uMhlathuze Municipality;
- To promote capacity and skills development for local decision-makers; and
- The integration of the outcome of the SEA process with the IDP.

As discussed in chapter two the initial thinking behind the integration of SEA into the IDP process was that the SEA would complement and add value to the process as well as integrate the principles of sustainable development. In theory, therefore, the schematic diagram in Figure 5.1 represented how the SEA and IDP would take place.



**Figure 5.1. Integrating SEA and IDP in theory**

In practice, the process occurred as outlined in the following section. This analysis is based on the IDP reports (Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR 2002) and SEA reports (CSIR 2002).

#### **5.2.4. Description of Phase One: Analysis**

The analysis phase of the IDP constituted a situational analysis of the Municipal area in terms of:

- A technical analysis with regards to development standards and;
- Public participation to obtain information from stakeholders on the current situation of the area.

The aim of the situational analysis was to determine the key priorities to be addressed by the uMhlathuze Municipality. These key priorities were to form the basis for the objectives and strategies to be formulated in Phase two of the IDP process.

The situational analysis comprised the consolidation of existing information and desktop research. Primary research was not included in the brief, but a physical survey of the area was conducted. The situational analysis followed a sectoral approach. For every development sector, specific standards pertaining to that sector or service was provided. Current service delivery within the Municipality was measured in terms of national minimum standards and backlogs were consequently identified (CSIR 2002).

The situational analysis of the IDP focused on the following key headings:

- Socio-economic analysis
  - Population
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Income levels and poverty
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Growth projection and trends
  - Economic conditions
- Infrastructure Service Levels (Bulk and Internal) and gaps

- Water
- Sanitation
- Transportation Networks and Links
- Solid Waste
- Housing
- Social Development
  - Health
  - Welfare
  - Educational Services
  - Community Facilities
  - Sports, Arts Culture and Recreation
  - Cemeteries and Crematoria
  - Safety and Security
  - Post and telecommunication
  - Tourism and Economic Development
- Environmental Management
  - Climate and Atmosphere
  - Physiography
  - Biodiversity
  - Geology and Mineral Potential
  - The Marine Environment

The sections on water, solid waste and environmental management were covered within the SEA and discussed extensively in the State of the Environment (SoE) report.

As reflected in Figure 5.1. SEA elements that were to be incorporated into Phase One included:

- The identification of environmental opportunities and constraints;
- Defining key environmental and development issues; and
- A State of the Environment Report (SoE).

The SoE report was divided into the following chapters:

- The Atmosphere;
- Land;
- Freshwater Resources;

- Biodiversity;
- Marine and Coastal System Resources;
- Waste Management; and
- The Socio-economic environment.

The SoE Report loosely adopted the Pressure-State-Response (P-S-R) framework for SoE reporting (This framework is described in Appendix five). As illustrated in Figure 5.1 the SEA identified resource opportunities and constraints (for example environmental conditions were examined and areas that were threatened due to development of sensitive habitats were identified, thus highlighting the opportunities and constraints for future development in the area), key development issues (for example, a comprehensive inventory which includes emissions from all air pollution sources for all pollutants needs to be compiled for the uMhlathuze Municipal area) and information gaps (for example, there is a shortage of data relating to both the quantity and quality of ground water in the area) and produced a SoE Report. All of these were incorporated into the IDP analysis report. Furthermore, both the SEA and IDP outcomes were presented at the IDP Representative Forum meetings. The analysis phase culminated in a detailed situational analysis report. A 'Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats' (SWOT) analysis was carried out and within each sector various issues were prioritised. These sectors were categorized as follows:

- Institutional sector;
- Socio-economic sector;
- Engineering infrastructure;
- Social Development;
- Environmental Management; and
- Physical Development

Therefore, during the analysis phase of the IDP process, consideration was given to social, economic and environmental issues which are the basic tenets of sustainable development. The SEA was extremely useful during this phase as it provided information to support the analysis of environmental issues. It also highlighted environmental opportunities and constraints, listed key issues and provided recommendations for sustainable development. DEAT (2003) states that the identification of environmental assets of the area for which the IDP is being created, is

a critical first step in the analysis phase. Whilst a separate SoE report was produced for the SEA, information from this report was utilized in the compilation of the IDP situational assessment report. As highlighted earlier, as this information was presented in a P-S-R framework, it was clear as to what the key issues were.

If the SEA and planning team had worked more closely together during this phase of the IDP preparation a single integrated report that reflected the current situation (social, economic and biophysical) would have been produced. State of the Environment Reports in general provides a useful structure for the presentation of information that is collected during the IDP analysis phase (DEAT 2003).

The information contained in the SoE report was used to determine the overall IDP challenge and key issues. These were summarised as follows:

*“From the population profile and differentional analysis it is clear that the communities residing in the rural areas have a lower income and are more severely affected by aspects such as poverty, than the urban community. Community upliftment and empowerment programmes should therefore be focused on the rural areas. Economic development, attraction of investment and maintenance of development standards in the urban areas are however essential to ensure the overall growth and development of the City of uMhlathuze”*

Three needs were highlighted in terms of the IDP challenges. These included:

- Community upliftment and empowerment of rural areas;
- Economic development and attraction of investment; and
- Maintenance of development standards in urban areas.

The IDP challenge: *Maintenance of development standards in urban areas* focussed broadly on some of the environmental issues highlighted in the SEA. Of all the issues highlighted, the following four were chosen for inclusion into the IDP. These issues were selected by the IDP Steering Committee and presented to the IDP Representative Forum:

- A dedicated environmental management unit should be established in the Municipality;

- The metropolitan open space system (MOSS) should be enhanced and protected;
- Freshwater lakes are an asset and should be protected; and
- Improving the quality of freshwater systems is very important, particularly with all industries in the area.

As outlined above, the SEA highlighted a number of key issues for sustainable development. Of all the issues identified only these four were included into the IDP challenges. The example of the comprehensive air inventory cited earlier, for example, has direct consequences on the types of investment and development opportunities for the uMhlathuze Municipal area, and thus influences socio-economic development. However, despite the importance of this issue it did not feature in the IDP challenges. This is because the SEA highlighted all the issues that were important or had the potential to be important within the municipal area. No prioritization of the issues took place and hence issues that were important were excluded from the IDP list of key needs. The SEA should have been more robust for it to have been effective.

As highlighted in chapter three, SEA has been promoted in the literature as the tool to respond to all planning problems as well as to ensure that sustainability considerations are addressed. Literature on the practical application of SEA is lacking, as such there are very limited guidelines on best practice. In an attempt to meet the demands and expectations placed on this tool by various authors, SEAs in practice have tried to be 'all encompassing', that is, identifying as many issues and defining as many alternatives as possible, rather than focusing on a few critical issues that could be addressed immediately (Govender *per obs*).

DEAT (2003) states that if an SEA was undertaken during the analysis phase is important as it can be used to highlight environmental issues associated with key choices and trade-offs, as well as cumulative impacts of a particular strategy. This did not occur within the uMhlathuze SEA.

As discussed in the previous chapter and outlined above there is still a lack of clear procedural guidelines on how to apply this in practice.

### 5.2.5. Phase Two: Strategies

During this phase a vision for the Municipality was developed in consultation with stakeholders and that vision was set as a formulation to measure performance of the IDP (Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR 2002b).

The vision for the City of uMhlatuze was as follows:

*"The City of uMhlatuze metropolitan area, as a port city, will offer improved quality of life for all its citizens through sustainable development. It will be a renowned centre for:*

- *Trade;*
- *Tourism and nature-lovers;*
- *Coastal recreation;*
- *Commerce;*
- *Industry;*
- *Forestry; and*
- *Agriculture.*

A positive outcome of the SEA was that the process highlighted the lack of the concept of sustainability in the vision for the City of uMhlatuze. The concept was subsequently included in the vision. Furthermore, it highlighted the need for the principles underlying the vision to include that of sustainable growth and development as well as the importance of the natural assets of the city.

Although the SEA highlighted the lack of the concept of sustainability in the vision of the City, all that was included in the vision was an undefined concept. The word sustainable development seems to appear in the vision as a 'token' rather than being of great significance. The SEA in setting the strategic context should have defined what the working vision for sustainable development within the Municipality was as well as play a key role in determining the underlying principles and defining what those principles mean within the context of the City of uMhlatuze.

The subsequent task involved the design of objectives and strategies to enable the translation of the priority issues into projects for implementation within the Municipality.

The strategies phase revolved largely around a 'Strategic Development Rationale' which provided the overall approach to the development of the City. A key aspect to the Strategic Development Rationale was the promotion of a compact urban area managed through a strong infrastructure and services to optimize city efficiency. The most significant components of the structure included the development of hierarchy of nodes to form the focal points for development and service provision, to ensure access to social and economic opportunities for the area. The second component was focused on an effective movement network and passenger transport system within the City and the third focused on protecting the sensitive natural areas of the City and hence the extension of the MOSS<sup>7</sup> was recommended.

The objectives and strategies within the IDP document was structured to address key priorities rather than sectors. Strategies were grouped under the following broad headings:

- Spatial development

To improve physical and functional integration within the City of uMhlatuze and improve access to opportunities at local and city-wide level.

- Poverty alleviation and gender equity

To empower communities and specific disadvantaged groups in communities by providing access to social and engineering infrastructure

- Local economic development

To promote a vibrant local economy, create employment opportunities and attract investment

- Environmental management

To protect the natural resources and assets, while promoting sustainable social and economic development

- Institutional development.

To build institutional capacity and ensure effective and efficient service delivery.

---

<sup>7</sup> This is the Metropolitan Open Space System for the City, open space is defined as any vegetated area (e.g. nature reserves, private and public gardens, golf courses, sports fields, road and rail verges, open water bodies etc.) or open hard-surfaced areas (e.g. parking lots and other paved or concrete areas) within the urban environment. All of these are considered to have some physical or economic value (Roberts & Diederichs 2002)

Within the broad objective of environmental management two strategies were included in the IDP. The first strategy focused broadly on the implementation of the SEA. The second strategy focused on extending the MOSS.

Whilst the IDP strategies were being developed the SEA focused on developing strategies for environmental management. All of these strategies however, were grouped together and included as an overarching strategy of “implement the outcomes of the SEA” in the IDP strategies report.

Thus, only one objective aimed at environmental management was identified in the IDP. The strategies that support the objective were not necessarily relevant to the outcomes of the SEA. For example, as highlighted previously, key issues for development were highlighted in the SEA, however, these were not translated into objectives and strategies. As such projects for the implementation of these did not feature in the IDP. Again, if the teams worked more closely together, then greater integration may have been possible. However the IDP was the dominant process and the SEA was seen merely as a supporting tool and hence it was not all outcomes of these SEA were seen as important (*Govender per obs*). As highlighted in chapter two, municipalities were under extreme pressure to formulate their IDPs and therefore, this initial attempt was not as thorough as it should have been.

#### **5.2.6. Phase Three and Four: Projects and Integration**

The IDP process for the City of uMhlatuze did not draw a clear distinction between phases three and four as depicted in the guideline documents and as described in chapter four. The aims of the project phase as described in chapter four is to translate the strategies formulated into specific projects and also considers preliminary budget allocations. Furthermore, performance indicators should be identified to measure the performance of the objectives. The integration phase is to ensure that the results of the project planning are compliant with the vision, objectives, strategies and resources and to ensure fulfilment of the sectoral planning requirements.

The programmes, interventions and projects translated the Strategic Development Rationale into specific actions. Twenty five interventions/programmes were formulated and for each of these performance indicators were recommended. Of the twenty five interventions/programmes four related to the natural environment. This is because the SEA attempted to address all issues pertinent to sustainable development of the Municipality, and thus a key flaw in the process was that no prioritization of projects took place, and as a result the outcome of the SEA was a 'wish-list' of projects that were not affordable to the City Council, as well as lacked human resources to implement them. Projects had to compete with each other to secure funding during the budget process, and the lack of prioritization presented difficulty in motivating for the importance of environmental projects (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004).

The four projects included:

- Extend the MOSS:

The MOSS acts as the 'lungs of the city' and it is essential to combat air pollution and land degradation, while promoting biodiversity. Performance indicators included:

- Increase in area in hectare covered by the MOSS;
- Actual measures to maintain and protect open spaces through education, awareness and law enforcement; and
- Extend the MOSS to the entire City by 2004

- Formulate and implement a coastal management plan and programme

The Coastal management plan should be formulated and linked to the MOSS. Performance indicators included:

- Implementation of access control for vehicles on the beaches;
- Increased awareness of sensitive areas associated with the coastline through promotional material and signage; and
- Implement the Coastal Management Plan by 2004.

- Promotion of biodiversity

The eradication of alien and invader species required to protect biodiversity in the City of uMhlathuze. This includes maintenance of open spaces and parks. Performance indicators included:

- Specific policies and programmes should be in place by 2005.

- Implement measures to monitor and improve air quality and monitor land and freshwater resources

The current air quality monitoring plan should be extended to include other aspects such as dust, pollen etc. A monitoring scheme for land should be developed that addresses erosion, floodplain, stream bank degradation, soil compaction and slope stability. Performance indicators included:

- A monitoring scheme for land and freshwater resources should be in place by 2005.

Whilst performance indicators were included in the IDP report, they were broadly stated and thus not properly defined. For example, the performance indicator for 'promotion of biodiversity' simply states that 'specific policies and programmes should be in place by 2005'. This is vague and does not give a clear indication of the type of budget that should be allocated to ensure implementation, thus, the IDP allocated a minimal amount for the implementation of these projects.

Within this phase the SEA had recommended specific projects for the protection of the environmental assets and guidelines to ensure sustainable development. This information was captured in a document entitled 'The Strategic Environmental Management Plan' and amongst other things also included a description of the environmental function of the Municipality, environmental legislation and implications, environmental education and how to promote this within the Municipality, as well as the various environmental management and assessment tools and use of these tools within the Municipality. This document as a 'stand alone' document, that is not integrated with the IDP is currently used by the Environmental Manager of the Municipality to aid in carrying out the environmental management function (van der Wateren *pers. comm.*).

Furthermore, a document entitled 'A core set of Environmental Indicators' was produced. This document described the value of indicators in providing information for decision-making. It identified criteria for selecting indicators and provides an understanding of how indicators may be selected to reflect the functionality of individual systems for sustainability. It also described in detail why particular indicators were chosen for the Municipality. This outcome was different to that described in Figure 5.1

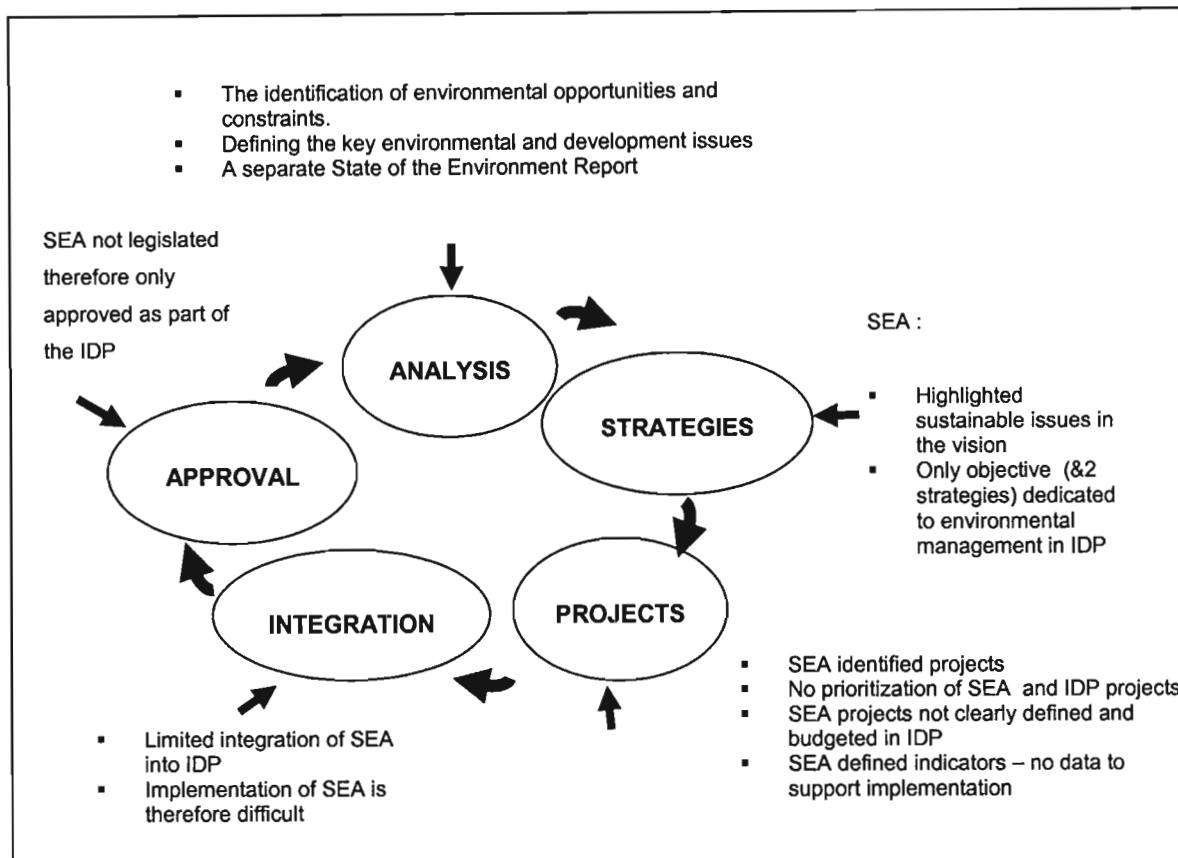
as the SEA did not develop objectives and criteria to assess the projects, but rather focused its attention on developing a core set of indicators for the Municipality. Another key flaw was that these indicators were selected on the basis of a 'nice to have' rather than on supporting data and resources available to measure and monitor them. Performance measurements are therefore difficult, as there is limited financial and human resources to initiate an information gathering process to implement these indicators. The result was thus a list of indicators that had little value at this time for the Municipality (CSIR 2002; Govender *per obs*).

### **Phase Five: Approval**

The IDP was adopted by the Municipal Council in March 2003. The SEA reports whilst receiving recognition did not receive formal adoption at Council. This seemed consistent with the previous planning era and it was therefore not surprising that the SEA was not adopted formally.

As IDPs are a legislated requirement, the Municipal Council committed to implementing the IDP and it was formally adopted by the Municipal Council in March 2003. Strategic Environmental Assessments are however not legislated and despite the Municipality commissioning this SEA to be integrated and add value to the SEA, it was not formally adopted. The SEA only has legal backing as part of the IDP and as full integration did not take place, motivation for and implementation of SEA projects was therefore weak (van der Wateren *et al.*, 2004).

In summary therefore, whilst some aspects of the SEA were useful for the formulation of the IDP, the SEA was not fully integrated into or fully supported by the IDP. Figure 5.1 proposed an approach for the integration of SEA into IDP. In practice, however procedures that were carried out were different to the proposed approach. The problems and the areas where integration did not take place was highlighted. Figure 5.2 provides a summary of the SEA integrated into the IDP for this particular case study.



**Figure 5.2. SEA integrated into the IDP process in practice**

To provide a convincing argument that SEAs have the potential to enhance IDPs a broad analysis of the IDP reports was carried out using the overarching criteria for sustainability. The aim of this analysis was to evaluate the extent to which the principles of environmental management and sustainability have been incorporated into the IDP reports.

Criteria for assessment of the IDP and SEA process were formulated based on the following: Department of Provincial and Local Government IDP guide packs; The National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) (Act 109 of 1998); Agenda 21; The DEAT SEA guideline document; Govender 2004; Morris 2002; and Todes 2002. The detailed analysis of the IDP was conducted using more specific criteria in the form of a list of key questions:

- Does the IDP consider environmental legislation, in particular NEMA?

The SEA which was meant to be part of the IDP focussed on the principles of NEMA and more specifically that of sustainable development. This concept was captured in the vision and the fundamental principles that support the vision.

- Does the IDP define environment as made up of the social, economic and biophysical components, or is environment considered to be just the 'green' issues?

The IDP focused strongly on the social and economic issues and the SEA had a bias towards the biophysical issues. The IDP incorporated some of the outcomes of the SEA and thus some consideration was given to biophysical issues. However, the processes were not fully integrated and as a result the overall bias was still towards socio-economic issues. This reveals a shortcoming to the SEA, as according to the literature, SEA is meant to integrate sustainability (social, economic, and natural) into decision-making. If the SEA considered broader sustainability issues, the relationships and interfaces between the different spheres could have been drawn out and the information been more valuable for the preparation of the IDP.

- Was the IDP planning team of an interdisciplinary nature?

No, the IDP planning team comprised of individuals that had a town and regional planning background. The IDP was also driven by the Town Planning Department of the Municipality. At this stage in the process a separate department dealing with environmental issues did not exist. The SEA team had a broader environmental management background; however, the process was driven from a 'traditional' planning perspective.

- Was the environmental manager of the Municipality or someone with environmental expertise on the IDP Steering Committee?

No as described, an environmental manager was not appointed at this stage in the process, the SEA team had the necessary environmental expertise, however, the SEA team were consultants that were appointed by the Municipality and therefore could not have a major influence on internal decision-making processes.

- Who was included in the IDP process?

The IDP process as required by the Municipal Systems Act formulated an IDP Representative Forum at the initiation of the IDP. This forum was largely represented by all sectors of the society, including business, community and environmental and other forums.

- What methods of public participation were employed during the IDP process, that is, were special initiatives undertaken to consult as widely as possible?

The IDP Representative Forum meetings were advertised in the local newspaper and invitations were sent to all rate-payers within the City. Furthermore, six sessions at the major towns were held during weekends to build capacity amongst the community on the purpose of the IDP and SEA, and how they could become involved in the process. The session involved presentations on both the IDP and SEA. However, these sessions were very poorly attended with zero attendance in some of the rural areas. More appropriate methods of public participation should have been employed for example, advertise on the local radio stations, and a more suitable choice of newspaper.

- Did the IDP provide a structure and mechanism for the responsibility and accountability of environmental issues?

The IDP had tried to include all the SEA outcomes in one objective in the IDP report. However, as the SEA had failed to prioritise those issues that were important and needed to be addressed first. The IDP did however, make provision for the employment of an environmental manager to implement the SEA and subsequent to the IDP process this position was filled.

The responses to these questions reveal that the IDP was biased towards socio-economic issues and as a result the SEA became an environmental assessment tool rather than a sustainability tool. As a result of this, these issues were dealt with separately, whereas focussing on the relationship between them could have assisted in

making informed decisions, for example, understanding whether and how trade-offs could be made.

Despite the bias that determined how the SEA should be carried out, in this case study it proved extremely difficult to carry out an SEA that would meet all the sustainability objectives outlined in the literature. As highlighted earlier and from the responses to the questions it is clearly evident that there are major limitations to what SEAs can achieve in practice as compared to what the literature states that SEA should achieve.

### **5.3. CONCLUSION**

As can be seen from the above discussion the SEA to some extent influenced the IDP. The SEA focused largely on biophysical environmental considerations and not on sustainability considerations as it is promoted by the SEA literature. This bias of SEA was highlighted in an earlier discussion (chapter four and five), where literature states that a key principle of SEA is that of sustainable development, however, much of the international literature as well as the South African SEA guideline document focus more attention on the biophysical environment, thus, there is uncertainty about whether SEA is a decision-making tool for sustainable development, or whether it is an assessment tool for the biophysical environment. This is evident in the case study where the SEA focussed on the biophysical issues. However, as the IDP had a strong socio-economic bias, it seemed acceptable that the SEA aimed to address environmental consequences of development, and therefore focused on integrating the biophysical environmental concerns into the planning process at the same level at which the social and economic considerations were addressed.

Despite the efforts of the SEA to give adequate consideration to the biophysical issues, there was still limited integration. The underlying problem is that the SEA whilst defining the biophysical issues, did not fully address the relationship of the biophysical environment to the socio-economic environment. Had this been done, and had suitable criteria been developed or issues prioritized greater integration may have been possible.

The SEA was also conducted at a strategic level, in other words the SEA focused on issues at a broad level and provided low levels of detail. The SEA could be criticized as being fairly 'superficial'.

The SEA attempted to address all problems and failed to link this to the financial and human resources at the Municipality; hence, the resultant 'wish-list' of projects. In order for the SEA process to be successful, prioritization was an essential step in the process that was lacking. As such, there was clearly a lack of internal analysis in the SEA of the overall sustainability criteria, therefore no prioritization occurred and hence limited use for the preparation of the IDP. In evaluating the two processes, it can be deduced that whilst some integration took place, and the IDP to some extent considered the outcomes from the SEA, this was largely two separate processes being carried out in parallel rather in concert.

The theory behind the effectiveness of integrating IDP and SEA processes is logical and seems sound. However, in the uMhlatuze study, the key problem was that there was great difficulty in translating SEA from a conceptual level to practice.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

This aim of this dissertation was to determine whether SEA is a useful tool for the formulation of IDPs and to make recommendations on how SEA can be used effectively in the IDP process. In order to do this origins and evolution of SEA and IDP have been described, the limitations and weaknesses of IDP theory and SEAs have been explored and conceptually a model for the integration of SEA and IDP was proposed. This model was tested in the City of uMhlathuze SEA and IDP processes and a critical analysis of the SEA/IDP integration was undertaken.

The SEA conducted for the Municipality was valuable; however, it produced knowledge intensive documents that lacked a clear focus or plan for implementation. Furthermore, the framework for environmentally sustainable development proposed by the SEA was at a strategic level. In other words the SEA focused on issues at a broad level and provided low levels of detail. Furthermore, whilst this framework outlines the core theme of sustainability, no clear procedural criteria to integrate sustainability into planning was provided. This was largely in response to the IDP's bias towards the socio-economic environment that the SEA focused largely on biophysical environmental considerations, and not on sustainability considerations as is promoted by the SEA literature. The underlying problem is that the SEA whilst defining the biophysical issues, did not fully address the relationship of the biophysical environment to the socio-economic environment. Had this been done, and had suitable criteria been developed or issues prioritized greater integration may have been possible.

A further shortcoming was that the SEA attempted to address all problems and issues and failed to link this to the financial and human resources at the Municipality. In order for the SEA process to be successful, there needs to be a clear procedure for integration or 'utilization' in the planning process. This did not happen in the uMhlathuze case; hence, the conclusion is that the IDP and SEA exercises were carried out in parallel rather than in concert.

The case study analysis revealed that SEA contributed to the IDP process but, the extent of this contribution was limited. Furthermore, the case study revealed various

shortcomings to SEA and in many instances this was in direct conflict with the SEA literature. I will outline some of these shortly.

As discussed in chapter two, past planning efforts were very focussed on provision of services as well as being fairly indifferent on issues of environmental sustainability. Therefore, these past prejudices could have influenced the process, as this was only the first attempt to move towards 'sustainable development' planning. Furthermore, as IDP emerged out of a need to redress the socio-economic inequalities of the past, IDPs have focussed on socio-economic considerations at the cost of biophysical issues. Part of the problem with IDPs is that they are founded on the Constitution which places emphasis on developing social and economic equity. The IDPs were also driven from the 'traditional' town planning departments within the municipalities, which could have also contributed to both the lack of attention to the notion of sustainable development and to the recommendations of the SEA. This sentiment echoes Brown (2002) who noted that in the past (that is, pre-IDP conceptualisation), planning did not consider natural resources in the development process, both in terms of environmental sources and sinks. He further stated that "*Natural resource management has largely been someone else's business*". Moreover, despite the IDP guidelines stressing the importance of environmental and sustainability issues, as pointed out in chapter three, various authors have noted that their combination is one of the most difficult challenges facing municipalities. Finally, while the IDP does provide a useful vehicle for the formulation of plans based on sustainability principles; SEA has yet to be designed and implemented so that the plans actually define what is meant by sustainability in particular contexts.

A complicating factor is that there is limited guidance of what constitutes a good SEA. Much of the literature has focussed of why SEAs should be done rather than on how an SEA should be done. Despite considerable work being done in SEA throughout the world there are diverse perspectives, definitions and approaches. The lack of a generally agreed conceptual basis for SEA has been one stumbling block. Strategic Environmental Assessment is still an evolving approach. A common element in more recent definitions is that of the integration of sustainability considerations in decision-making and most SEA practitioners agree that conceptually SEA is a structured, proactive process to strengthen consideration of environmental issues and

sustainability in strategic decision-making. It is this quality that makes SEA a potentially useful tool for the formulation of IDPs.

A key concern however, is that these claims are based on a theoretical definitions of the tool rather than on actual use and experience. Furthermore, the actual implementation of sustainable development may be problematic. In theory, sustainability requires a proactive approach that encompasses a wide range of human activities and environmental factors linked to an economic system. The uMhlathuze SEA suggested that there is still a strong bias towards the biophysical environmental issues and that there has yet to be made clear links to economic planning. Notably in the uMhlathuze case there was no financial assessment of the SEAs recommendations.

In turn there is uncertainty on whether SEA is really a tool that can define sustainable development in particular contexts or is a broad environmental assessment tool. More generally, a problem in South Africa is that there is no SEA specific legislation. Accordingly, SEAs undertaken have been largely voluntary and limited to those municipalities that have adequate financial resources. With the promulgation of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000) and the requirement that all municipalities in South Africa had to undertake an IDP process, a window of opportunity was presented for SEAs to be incorporated as a matter of course. However, the need to include SEA in the appropriate legislation appears to be forgotten. However, even if SEA is to be included in legislation, there would need to be careful phrasing to enable implementation given that SEA is a principle-based approach.

The concept of a principle-based approach is that whilst there is broad agreement on principles, interpretations of these principles may differ and this can lead to confusion in practice. Nonetheless, there are clear indications of how SEA can be linked to IDPs. My discussion of the literature and of the uMhlathuze case shows clearly that SEA should be undertaken prior to the formulation of a development plan. It is a means to identify resource opportunities and constraints, set limits of acceptable change, and outline different scenarios. In essence, SEA should provide the basis for development planning.

The point above summarises my argument that the way to effectively combine SEA and IDP is to define and distinguish how this is to be done at the level of policy, institutions and methodology. Definition at policy level means that there are key policies in place requiring strategic development and environmental plans to facilitate sustainable development. Definition at institutional level requires that there is capacity building and increased co-ordination all spheres of government and within municipal structures, and definition at the methodological level means that the SEA should not be seen separate from the planning process but rather integrated into it.

In summary the concept of SEA could be a foundation for IDP preparation, reviews and revision. However, SEAs are not legislated and therefore there is little incentive for municipalities to explore the utility of SEA. Furthermore, many municipalities have severe financial constraints and SEA can be seen as an 'expensive' process. In addition, the application of SEA in South Africa must recognise the current institutional problem, namely, lack of skills and capacity. In short, the outcomes of an SEA must be translated into practical solutions rather than being cast as considerations. In other words the focus of environmental scientists now must be to define how, rather than why SEA should be incorporated into development planning.

## REFERENCES

Ambert, C. & Feldman, M. 2002. *Are IDPs barking up the wrong tree? A story of planning, budgeting, alignment and decentralization*. Paper presented at The Planning Africa Conference, International Convention Centre, Durban

ANC (African National Congress). 1992. *The Reconstruction and Development Programme: a policy framework*. African National Congress, Umanyano Publications, Johannesburg

Agyemang, D-P. 2002. *PIMSS as a capacity building approach to Integrated Development Planning (IDP) in South Africa*. Paper presented at The Planning Africa Conference, International Convention Centre, Durban

Bell, S. & Morse, S. 1999. *Sustainability Indicators – Measuring the immeasurable*. Earthscan Publications Ltd, London

Bina, O. 2001. *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Decision-Making processes: new challenges ahead*. Paper presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment

Brown, A.L. 2002. *Planning and Environment can meet in a University Planning Programme*. Paper presented at The Planning Africa Conference, International Conference Centre, Durban

Brown, A.L. 2000. *SEA experience in Development Assistance using the Environmental Overview*. In: Partidario, M.R. & Clark, R (editors) *Perspectives on Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Lewis Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida

Brown, A.L. & Therivel, R. 2000. *Principles to guide the development of Strategic Environmental Assessment Methodology*. In: Marsden, S. & Dovers, S. (eds) 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Australasia*. The Federation Press, Sydney, Australia

CEEA (Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency). 2000. *Strategic Environmental Assessment: The 1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Programme Proposals: Guidelines for implementing the Cabinet Directive*. In: DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism). 2004b. *Strategic Environmental Assessment, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 10*, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria

Chipkin, I. 2002. *A developmental role for local government*. In: Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. & Wooldridge, D. (eds). 2002. *Democratising Local Government, the South African Experiment*. University of Cape Town Press, South Africa

Christopher, A. J. (1994) *Atlas of Apartheid*, Routledge, London.

Clark, R. 2000. *Toward a legal framework for SEA in Canada*. In: Partidario, M.R. & Clark, R (editors) *Perspectives on Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Lewis Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida

Coetzee, M. 2002. *Summary document on the IDP LA21 relationship*. In: Department of Provincial and Local Government, *Local Pathway to Sustainable Development in South Africa*. Package presented to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg

Council for the Environment. 1989. *Integrated Environmental Management in South Africa*. Joan Lotter Publications, Pretoria

CSIR 2003a. *Guidelines for Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Published by the Secretariat for Eastern African Coastal Area Management (SEACAM), Maputo, Mozambique

CSIR. 2003b. *CSIR EIA Project Management Manual: Practical Guide to Managing the EIA Process*. CSIR Report Number ENV-S- 1 2001-20

CSIR. 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment for the uMhlathuze Municipality: State of the Environment Report*. CSIR, Environmentek, Durban

CSIR. 2001a. *An introduction to Sustainability Assessment and Management*. CSIR, Durban, 25pp

CSIR 2001b. *Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Empangeni Transitional Local Council*. CSIR, Environmentek, Durban

CSIR 2000. *Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Richards Bay Forward Planning Section*. CSIR, Environmentek, Durban

CSIR. 1998. *Strategic Environmental Management Plan for the Maputo Corridor, Mpumalanga Province*. CSIR, Environmentek, Durban

Dalal-Clayton, B & Sadler, B. 2003. *The Status and Potential of Strategic Environmental Assessment: An overview of SEA with a special focus on developing countries and countries in transition and its potential role as a key tool for strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.iied.org> [8 May 2003]

Dalkmann, H., Herrera, R.J. & Bongardt, D. 2004. Analytical strategic environmental assessment (ANSEA) – developing a new approach to SEA. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 24: 385 – 402

Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs. 2001. *White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management*. Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Pretoria

DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism). 2004a. *Overview of Integrated Environmental Management*, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 10, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria

DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism). 2004b. *Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 10, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria

DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism). 2003. *National Framework Guidelines: Strengthening Sustainability in the Integrated Development Planning*

*process*. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa

DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism). 2000. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in South Africa, Guideline Document*. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa

Demarcation Board. 2004. *The uThungulu District Council* [Online]: <http://www.demarcation.org.za>. Accessed 12 February 2004

DLA (Department of Land Affairs). 2001. *Guidelines for the Integration of environmental planning into land reform and land development*. Pretoria, Republic of South Africa

DPLG & GTZ (Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation). 2001a. *IDP Guide Pack – Guide 0: Overview*. The Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Pretoria

DPLG & GTZ (Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation). 2001b. *IDP Guide Pack – Guide I: Guidelines*. The Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Pretoria

DPLG & GTZ (Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation). 2001c. *IDP Guide Pack – Guide II: Preparation*. The Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Pretoria

DPLG & GTZ. (Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Co-operation). 2001d. *IDP Guide Pack – Guide III: Methodology*. The Department of Provincial and Local Government and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, Pretoria

DPLG (Department of Provincial and Local Government), GTZ (German Agency for Technical Co-operation) and CSIR. 2002. *Integrated Development Planning, Local Pathway to sustainable development*. Pack prepared for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg.

DWAF (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry). 2001. *A guide to Strategic Environmental Assessment for water use in catchments*. Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Pretoria

EC (European Commission). 1997. *Proposal for a Council Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*. In: Bina, O. 2001. *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Decision-Making processes: new challenges ahead*. Paper presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment.

Eggenberger, M. & Partidario M, R. 2000. Development of a framework to assist in the integration of environmental, social and economic issues in spatial planning. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 18(3): 201 – 207

European Union. 2003. *Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment*. [Online]. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia> Accessed October 2003

FEPD (The Intergovernmental Forum for Effective Planning and Development). 1995. In: Mabin, A. 2002. *Local Government in the emerging national planning context*. In: Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. & Wooldridge, D. (eds). 2002. *Democratising Local Government, the South African Experiment*. University of Cape Town Press, South Africa

Fischer, T.B. 2004. Transport policy making and SEA in Liverpool, Amsterdam and Berlin – 1777 and 2002. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 24: 319 – 336

Fischer, T.B. 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in transport and land use planning*. Earthscan Publications, London

Flynn A., Cowell R., Marsden T. & Bishop K. 1999. Editorial. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* 1(1): 1-5.

Fuggle, R.F. & Rabie, M.A. 1994. *Environmental Management in South Africa*. Juta & Co Ltd, Cape Town

Gilpin, A. 1995. *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Cutting edge for the twenty-first century*. Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom

Glasson, J. 1995. *Regional Planning and the Environment*. In: Bina, O. 2001. *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Decision-Making processes: new challenges ahead*. Paper presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment.

Govender, K. 2004. *Internal assessment of the Northern Cape Integrated Development Plans*. CSIR Division of Water, Environment and Forest Technology.

Govender, K., Smit, J.H., Hounsoume, R. & Rossouw, N. 2001. *Integrating Strategic Environmental Assessment and Integrated Development Planning with reference to the uMhlathuze Municipality*. Paper presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment (South Africa). White River, Nelspruit, South Africa

Harrison, P. 2002. *Towards integrated inter-governmental planning in South Africa: the IDP as a building block*, Report to the Department of Provincial and Local Government and the Municipal Demarcation Board

Howard (1902) *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (London, 1902. Reprinted, edited with a Preface by F. J. Osborn and an Introductory Essay by Lewis Mumford. (London: Faber and Faber, [1946]):50-57, 138- 147.

IAIA (International Association for Impact Assessment). 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment: Performance Criteria*, Special Publication Series No. 1. IAIA, Fargo

Kjorven, O. & Lindhjem, H. 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in World Bank Operations: Experience to date – future potential*, ECON Centre for Economic Analysis,

Oslo, Environment Strategy Papers, Strategy Series Number 4, The World Bank Environment Department, Washington D.C.

KZN (KwaZulu-Natal). 1998. *The KwaZulu-Natal Planning and Development Act of 1998*

Luckin, P. 2003. *Towards Integrated Sustainable development: The integration of the Agenda 21 Principles and approach into Integrated Development Planning at District Scale: A case study of the Ugu District Integrated Development Plan (KwaZulu-Natal)*. Thesis presented for the degree of Masters in Town and regional Planning at the University of Natal, Durban

Mabin, A. 2002. *Local Government in the emerging national planning context*. In: Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. & Wooldridge, D. (eds). 2002. *Democratising Local Government, the South African Experiment*. University of Cape Town Press, South Africa

Marsden, S. 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment: an international overview*. In: Marsden, S & Dovers, S. (eds). *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Australasia*. The Federation Press, Australia

Morris, B. 2002. *Strengthening the environmental dimensions of Integrated Development Plans of Local Government in the Mpumalanga Province*. Thesis presented for the degree of Master of Science, University of the Free State, South Africa

National Department of Transport. 2002. *Draft White Paper on the National Commercial Ports Policy, Department of Transport*

Noble, B.F. 2000. Strategic Environmental Assessment: What is it? And what makes it strategic? *Journal of Environmental Assessment, Policy and Management*. 2(2): 203 - 224

Parnell, S. & Pieterse, E. 2000. *Developmental Local Government*. In: Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M. & Wooldridge, D. (eds). 2002. *Democratising Local*

*Government, the South African Experiment.* University of Cape Town Press, South Africa

Partidario, M. 2003. *Strategic Impact Assessment for Spatial Planning: Methodological guidance for applications in Portugal.* Prepared for the Director-General for Spatial Planning and Urban Development, Ministry of Cities, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Portugal

Partidario, M, R. 2000. Elements of a SEA framework – improving the added value of SEA. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review.* 20:647-663

Partidario, M. 1990. *Strategic Environmental Assessment – Principles and Potential.* In: Petts, J. (ed). 1999. *Handbook of Environmental Impact Assessment Volume 1 – Environmental Impact Assessment: Process, Methods and Potential,* Blackwell Science, London pp 3 – 11 al 1993

Pearce, D et al. 1993. *Blueprint for a green economy.* In: Thérivel, R. 2004. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action.* Earthscan, UK and USA

Petts, J. 1999. *Handbook on EIA,* Blackwell, London

Pinfield, G. 1992. Land-use planning. *Project Appraisal.* 7(3): 157 – 163

Rauch, T. 2002. In: Harrison, P. 2002. *Towards integrated inter-governmental planning in South Africa: the IDP as a building block,* Report to the Department of Provincial and Local Government and the Municipal Demarcation Board

Rees, W.E. 1998. A Role for Environmental Assessment in Achieving Sustainable Development. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 8: 273 – 291

Republic of South Africa. 2001. *Local Government Municipal Planning and Performance Management Regulations No. 7146.* Government Gazette no. 21776, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 2001. *The White Paper on Spatial Planning and Land Use Management*. Ministry of Agriculture and Land Affairs

Republic of South Africa. 2000. *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000*. Government Gazette no 22605, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1998. *The Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998*. Government Gazette, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1998. *The Municipal Structures Act 177 of 1998*. Government Gazette, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1998. *National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998*. Government Gazette no 19519, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1998. *White Paper on Environmental Management Policy for South Africa*. Government Gazette 18894, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1998. *White Paper on Local Government*. Government Gazette, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1996. *The Constitutional of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996*. Government Gazette, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1995. *The Development Facilitation Act 67 of 1995*, Government Gazette, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1993. *The Local Government Transition Act 209 of 1993*. Government Gazette, Cape Town

Republic of South Africa. 1989. *Environmental Conservation Act 73 of 1989*. Government Gazette, Cape Town

Roberts, D. & Diederichs, N. 2002. *Durban's Local Agenda 21 Programme. 1994 – 2001. Tackling Sustainable Development*. Natal Printers, Pinetown

Rossouw, N. & Retief, F. 2004. *The application of SEA to spatial planning and land development in South Africa*. Unpublished manuscript

Rossouw, N., Audouin, M., Lochner, P., Heather-Clark, S. & Wiseman, K. 2000. Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment in South Africa. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*. 18(3): 217 - 223

Rossouw, N.J. & Govender, K. 2003. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Development Planning in South Africa. *Environmental Assessment Outlook*, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)

Sadler, B. 2001. *A Framework Approach to Strategic Environmental Assessment: Aims, Principles, and Elements of Good Practice*. In: The Regional Environmental Centre (REC) for Central and Eastern Europe. Proceedings of the International Workshop on Public Participation and Health Aspects in Strategic Environmental Assessment, 23 – 24 November 2000, Szentendre, Hungary. Pp 7 – 24

Sadler, B. 1996. *International Study of the Effectiveness of Environmental Assessment*. Minister of Supply and Services, Canada

Sadler, B. & Verheem, R. 1996. *Strategic Environmental Assessment: Status, Challenges and Future Directions*, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of The Netherlands, The Netherlands

SDG (Steer Davies Gleave). 1996. *State of the Art on Strategic Environmental Assessment for Transport Infrastructure*. In: Bina, O. 2001. *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Decision-Making processes: new challenges ahead*. Paper presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment.

Sheate, W. 1992. Strategic Environmental Assessment in the transport sector. *Project Appraisal*. 7(3): 170 - 174

Smit, J. H. 2000. *The integration of Strategic Environmental Assessment with the Integrated Development Planning process*. Thesis presented for the degree of Master of Science, University of the Free State, South Africa

Shepherd, A. & Ortolano, L. 1996. Strategic Environmental Assessment for Sustainable Urban Development. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*. **16**: 321 – 335

Sowman, M. 2002. *Integrating environmental sustainability issues into local government planning and decision-making processes*. In: Parnell, S., Pieterse, E., Swilling, M & Wooldridge, D (editors). *Democratizing Local Government, the South African Experiment*. University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town

Sowman, M., Fuggle, R., & Preston, G. 1995. A review of the evolution of environmental evaluation procedures in South Africa. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 15: 45-67

Thérivel, R. 2004. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action*. Earthscan, UK and USA

Thérivel, R. 1998 Strategic Environmental Assessment of Development Plans in Great Britain. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*. **18**: 39 - 57

Thérivel, R. & Partidario, M. 1996. *The Practice of Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Earthscan Publications Ltd, London

Thérivel, R., Wilson, E., Thompson, S., Heaney, D. & Pritchard, D. 1992. *Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Earthscan Publications Ltd, London

Thisssen, W.A.H. 2000. *Criteria for evaluation of SEA*. In: Partidario, M.R. & Clark, R (editors) *Perspectives on Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Lewis Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida

Thisssen, W.A.H. 2000. Strategic Environmental Assessment at a crossroads. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 18(3): 174 – 176

Todes, A. 2003. *Regional Planning and Sustainability: Reshaping Development through Integrated Development Plans in the Ugu District of South Africa*. Paper

presented to the Regional Studies Association Conference, Re-inventing Regions in the Global Economy, Pisa

Todes, A. 2002. *The Ugu District Municipality – KwaZulu-Natal. An Assessment of the Integrated Development Plan.* In: UNDP-SA. 2002. *Case studies on Sustainability in Local Governance.* United Nations Development Programme, South Africa

Tomlinson, P. 2001. *The Evolution of Strategic Environmental Assessment/Integrated Assessment and Decision-Making in UK Transport Planning.* TRL Ltd, Crowthorne, Berkshire

Treweek, J. 1999. *Ecological Impact Assessment.* In: Bina, O. 2001. *Strategic Environmental Assessment and Decision-Making processes: new challenges ahead.* Paper presented at the International Association for Impact Assessment. Ugu District Municipality. 2002. *Integrated Development Plan: An Overview*

UKZN (University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, Durban). 2004. *Examining the relationship between Environment and Planning in KwaZulu-Natal.* Project conducted for the KwaZulu-Natal Planning and Development Commission.

United Nations. 1992. *Agenda 21 report, United Nations Sustainable Development.* [Online]. Available: <http://www.un.org/sustdev/agenda21chapter40.htm> [7 March 2003]

UNDP-SA. 2002. *Case studies on Sustainability in Local Governance.* United Nations Development Programme, South Africa

UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe). 2003. *The Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.* In: DEAT (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism). 2004b. *Strategic Environmental Assessment, Integrated Environmental Management, Information Series 10,* Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Pretoria

UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe). 1987. In: Gilpin, A. 1995. *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Cutting edge for the twenty-first century*. Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom

Urquhart, P. & Atkinson, D. 2000. *A Pathway to Sustainability. Local Agenda 21 in South Africa*. Environmental Evaluation Unit, University of Cape Town

Van Der Vorst, R., Grafe-Guckens, A., & Sheate, W. R. 1999. A systematic Framework for Environmental Decisions Making. *Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management* 1(1): 1-26

Van der Wateren, T., Govender, K., Hounsoume R., Smit, J. H. 2004. *Strategic Environmental Assessment: Its value in local government planning, The Case of the uMhlathuze Municipality, South Africa*. Paper presented at IAIAAsa, KwaZulu-Natal

Van der Wateren. 2004. Personal Communication

Verheem, R.A.A. & Tonk, J.A.M.N. 2000. Strategic Environmental Assessment: One concept, multiple forms. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*. 18(3): 177 - 182

Verheem, R. 1992. Environmental Assessment at the strategic level in The Netherlands. *Project Appraisal*. 7(3): 150 - 156

Vuka Town and Regional Planners & CSIR. 2002. *Integrated Development Plan*. Prepared for the uMhlathuze Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal

Voice. 2001. Making sense of Integrated Development Planning. *The Voice*, Issue 2

Wallington, T.J. 2002. *Civic Environmental Pragmatism. A dialogical framework for Strategic Environmental Assessment*. Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University, Western Australia

Watson, V. 2002. *Interpretations of place and territory in African cities*. Paper presented at the Planning Africa Conference, International Convention Centre, Durban.

WCED (World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Weaver, A. 2002. Personal Communication

Webb, J.W., & Sigal, L.L. 1992. Strategic Environmental Assessment in the United States. *Project Appraisal*. 7(3): 137 - 141

Wiseman, K. 2000. *Environmental assessment and planning in South Africa: the SEA connection*. In: Partidario, M.R. & Clark, R (editors) *Perspectives on Strategic Environmental Assessment*, Lewis Publishers, Boca Raton, Florida

Woods, C. 1998. *EIA in plan making*. In: Wathern, P (ed). *Environmental Impact Assessment: Theory and Practice*. Unwin Hyman, London

Woods, C. 1995. *Environmental Impact Assessment*. In: Fischer, T.B. 2002. *Strategic Environmental Assessment in transport and land use planning*. Earthscan Publications, London

## **Appendix 1: The South African EIA Process**

### **Introduction**

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in South Africa is undertaken in terms of section 21, 22 and 26 of the Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989). An EIA communicates to the authorities and the proponent what the consequences of their choices will be in biophysical, economic and social terms. A key component of the EIA is to ensure that stakeholder knowledge and concerns inform the assessment process.

The EIA follows a step-by-step process (see Figure 1), in consultation with stakeholders and specialists, to identify key issues and concerns related to the proposed project which will be thoroughly investigated. In this way it is possible to maximise the potential benefits of the proposed project and to mitigate the negative impacts. The South African EIA regulations allow for decision making at the end of scoping, of which three outcomes are possible:

- Project approved;
- Project not approved; or
- Project is required to go to the EIA phase.

The main phases in an EIA include the following:

- Scoping Phase
- Impact Assessment Phase
- Reporting Phase
- Decision-making Phase

### **Scoping Phase**

The Scoping Phase is a vital step in the EIA process and its purpose is to identify issues and concerns to be addressed in the assessment. This process is driven by stakeholder engagement, also termed the public participation process. Stakeholders are first informed of the proposed activity and afforded an opportunity to identify issues of concern. Therefore, the Scoping Phase is described as a process of interaction

between the interested public, government departments and proponents for identifying issues with respect to the proposed development (CSIR, 2003c). A Draft Scoping Report (DSR) is thereafter prepared and publicly reviewed before it is submitted to the Lead Authority for consideration. Key components of the scoping phase include public participation and the technical process.

### **Impact Assessment Phase**

This phase involves the commissioning of specialist studies to investigate the key environmental issues and concerns raised in the Scoping Phase.

### **Environmental Impact Reporting Phase**

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) integrates the findings of the specialist studies from the previous phase, as well as the public participation process. The public participation process takes place throughout the EIA.

### **Decision-making Phase**

This stage of the EIA process refers to the process of issuing a Record of Decision (RoD) by the Lead Authority, either approving the project or not.

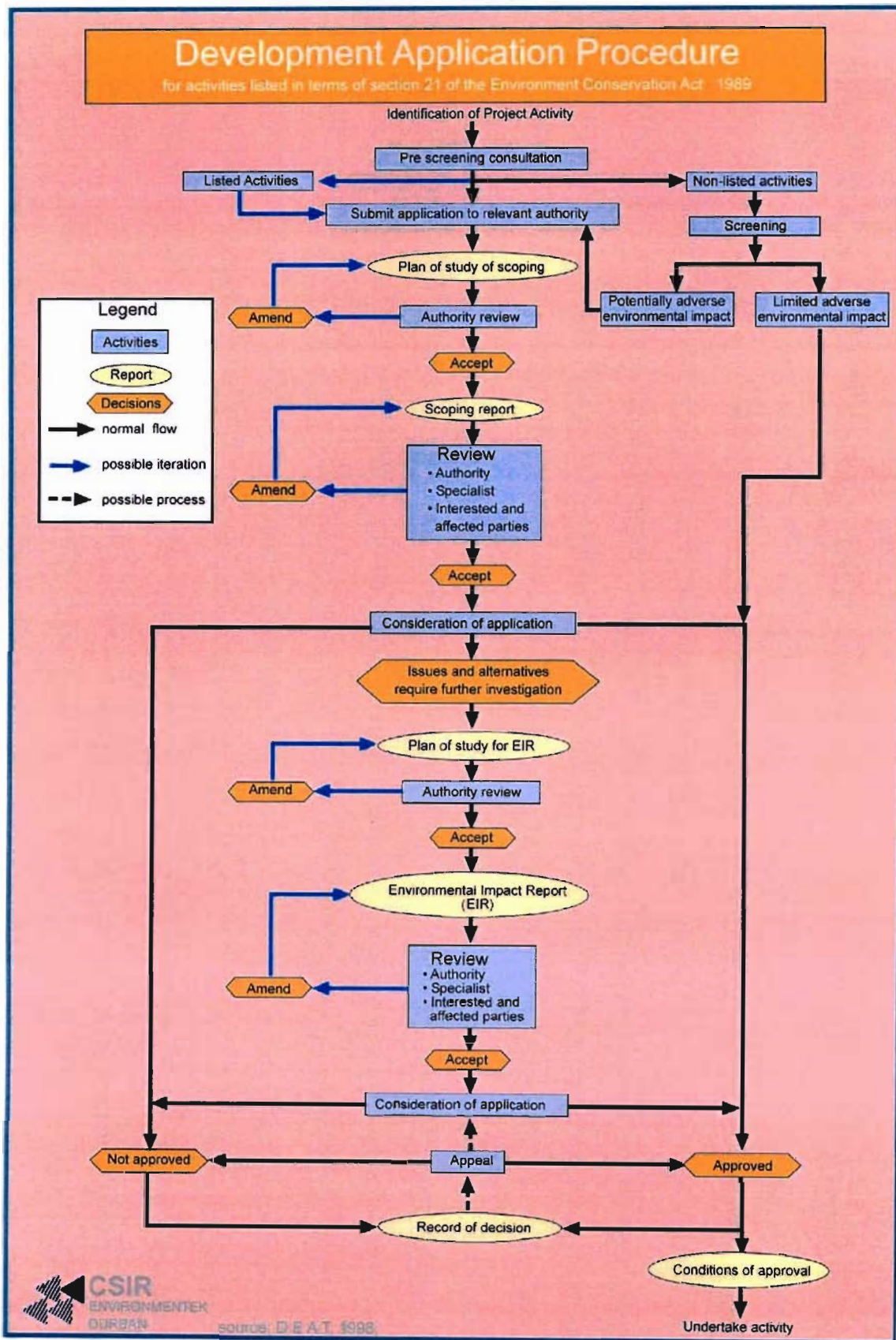


Figure 1: The EIA Process Flow Diagram

## Appendix 2: The NEMA Principles

The National Environmental Management Principles in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998), Chapter 1.

### Principles

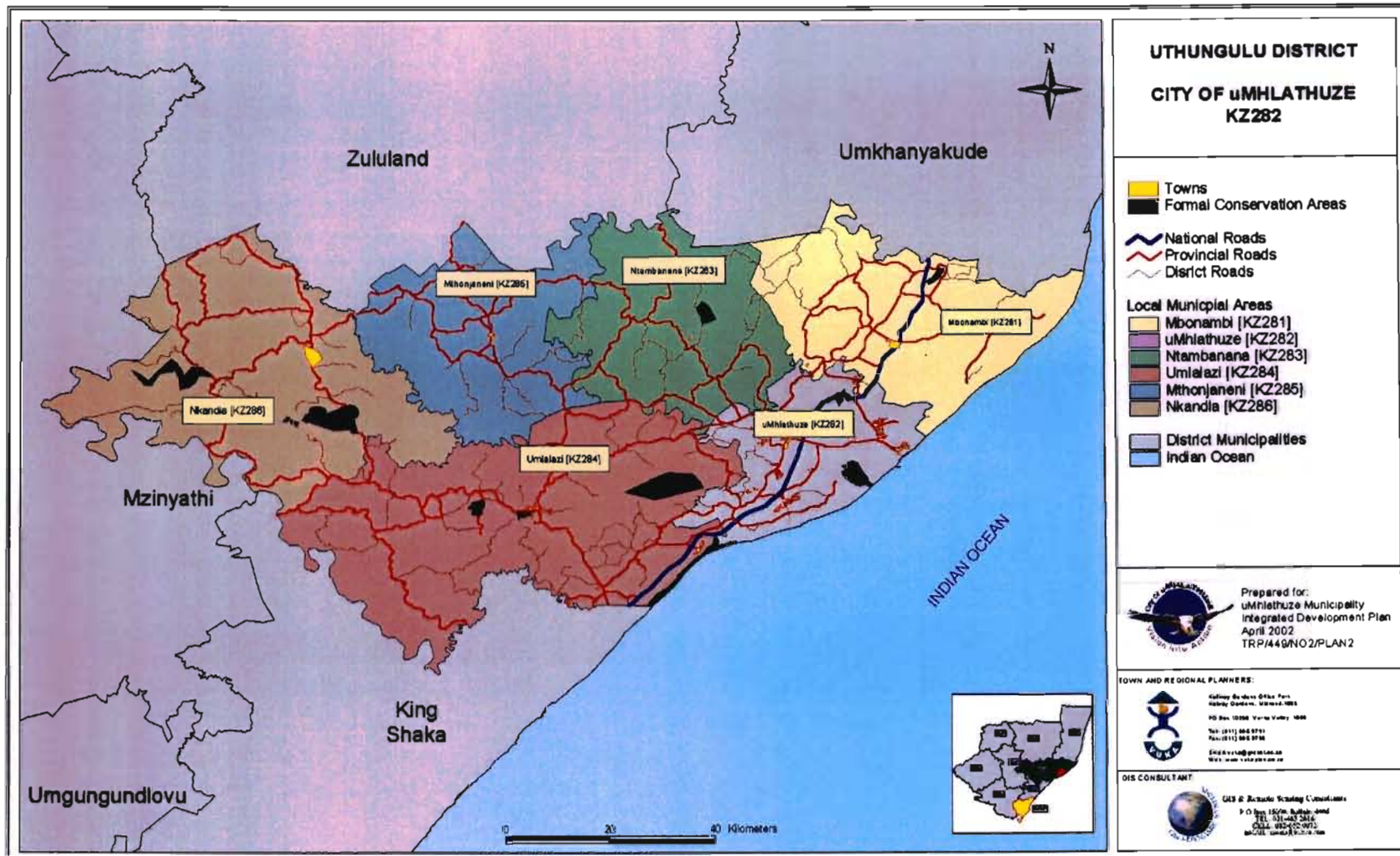
2.(1) The principles set out in this section apply throughout the Republic to the actions of all organs of state that may significantly affect the environment and

- (a) shall apply alongside all other appropriate and relevant considerations, including the State's responsibility to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the social and economic rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution and in particular the basic needs of categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination;
  - (b) serve as the general framework within which environmental management and implementation plans must be formulated;
  - (c) serve as guidelines by reference to which any organ of state must exercise any function when taking any decision in terms of this Act or any statutory provision concerning the protection of the environment;
  - (d) serve as principles by reference to which a conciliator appointed under this Act must make recommendations; and
  - (e) guide the interpretation, administration and implementation of this Act, and any other law concerned with the protection or management of the environment.
- (2) Environmental management must place people and their needs at the forefront of its concern, and serve their physical, psychological, developmental, cultural and social interests equitably.
- (3) Development must be socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.
- (4) (a) Sustainable development requires the consideration of all relevant factors including the following:
- (i). that the disturbance of ecosystems and loss of biological diversity are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimised and remedied;
  - (ii). that pollution and degradation of the environment are avoided, or, where they cannot be altogether avoided, are minimised and remedied;

- (iii). that the disturbance of landscapes and sites that constitute the nation's cultural heritage is avoided, or where it cannot be altogether avoided, is minimised and remedied;
  - (iv). that waste is avoided, or where it cannot be altogether avoided, minimised and re-used or recycled where possible and otherwise disposed of in a responsible manner;
  - (v). that the use and exploitation of non-renewable natural resources is responsible and equitable, and takes into account the consequences of the depletion of the resource;
  - (vi). that the development, use and exploitation of renewable resources and the ecosystems of which they are part do not exceed the level beyond which their integrity is jeopardised;
  - (vii). that a risk-averse and cautious approach is applied, which takes into account the limits of current knowledge about the consequences of decisions and actions; and
  - (viii). that negative impacts on the environment and on people's environmental rights be anticipated and prevented, and where they cannot be altogether prevented, are minimised and remedied.
- 
- (b) Environmental management must be integrated, acknowledging that all elements of the environment are linked and interrelated, and it must take into account the effects of decisions on all aspects of the environment and all people in the environment by pursuing the selection of the best practicable environmental option.
  - (c) Environmental justice must be pursued so that adverse environmental impacts shall not be distributed in such a manner as to unfairly discriminate against any person, particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged persons.
  - (d) Equitable access to environmental resources, benefits and services to meet basic human needs and ensure human well-being must be pursued and special measures may be taken to ensure access thereto by categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.
  - (e) Responsibility for the environmental health and safety consequences of a policy, programme, project, product, process, service or activity exists throughout its life cycle.
  - (f) The participation of all interested and affected parties in environmental governance must be promoted, and all people must have the opportunity to develop the understanding, skills and capacity necessary for achieving equitable and effective participation, and participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged persons must be ensured.
  - (g) Decisions must take into account the interests, needs and values of all interested and affected parties, and this includes recognising all forms of knowledge, including traditional and ordinary knowledge.

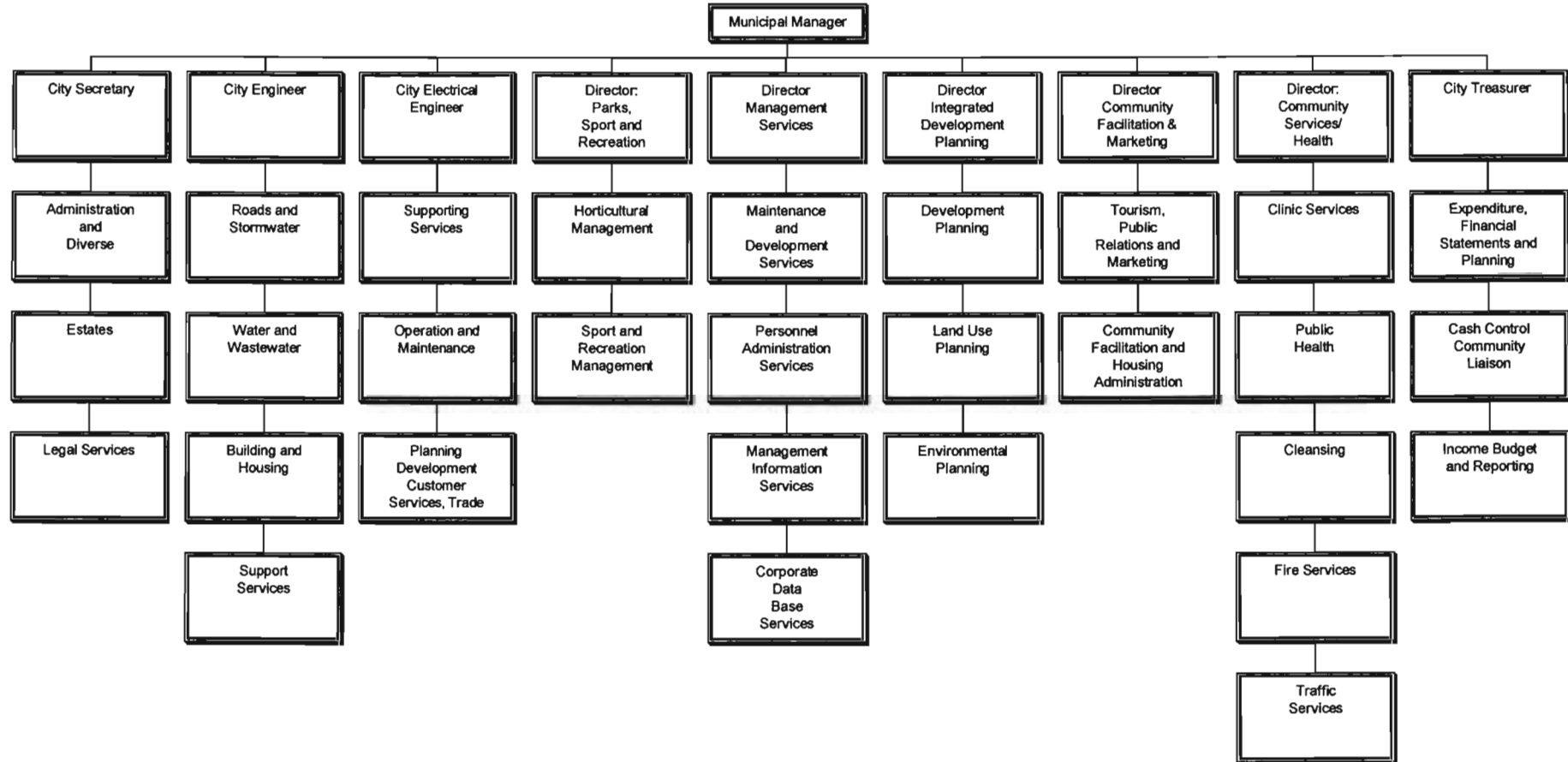
- (h) Community wellbeing and empowerment must be promoted through environmental education, the raising of environmental awareness, the sharing of knowledge and experience and other appropriate means.
- (i) The social, economic and environmental impacts of activities, including disadvantages and benefits, must be considered, assessed and evaluated, and decisions must be appropriate in the light of such consideration and assessment.
- (j) The right of workers to refuse work that is harmful to human health or the environment and to be informed of dangers must be respected and protected.
- (k) Decisions must be taken in an open and transparent manner, and access to information must be provided in accordance with the law.
- (l) There must be intergovernmental co-ordination and harmonisation of policies, legislation and actions relating to the environment.
- (m) Actual or potential conflicts of interest between organs of state should be resolved through conflict resolution procedures.
- (n) Global and international responsibilities relating to the environment must be discharged in the national interest.
- (o) The environment is held in public trust for the people, the beneficial use of environmental resources must serve the public interest and the environment must be protected as the people's common heritage.
- (p) The costs of remedying pollution, environmental degradation and consequent adverse health effects and of preventing, controlling or minimising further pollution, environmental damage or adverse health effects must be paid for by those responsible for harming the environment.
- (q) The vital role of women and youth in environmental management and development must be recognised and their full participation therein must be promoted.
- (r) Sensitive, vulnerable, highly dynamic or stressed ecosystems, such as coastal shores, estuaries, wetlands, and similar systems require specific attention in management and planning procedures, especially where they are subject to significant human resource usage and development pressure.

**Appendix 1: Location of the uMhlathuze Municipality**



**Appendix 4: The Organizational Chart of the uMhlathuze Municipality**

**CITY OF UMHLATHUZE  
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**



## Appendix 5: The Pressure-State-Response Framework

The Pressure-State-Response Framework (P-S-R) is widely used for State of the Environment Reporting. The key elements of this framework include:

- Pressures

Pressures are defined as the underlying forces such as population growth, poverty, consumption of pollution. The pressures on the environment include primary pressures such as population growth and economic development, and secondary pressures such as consumption patterns and pollution. Pressures are therefore the factors and influences that are causing environmental problems (CSIR 2002).

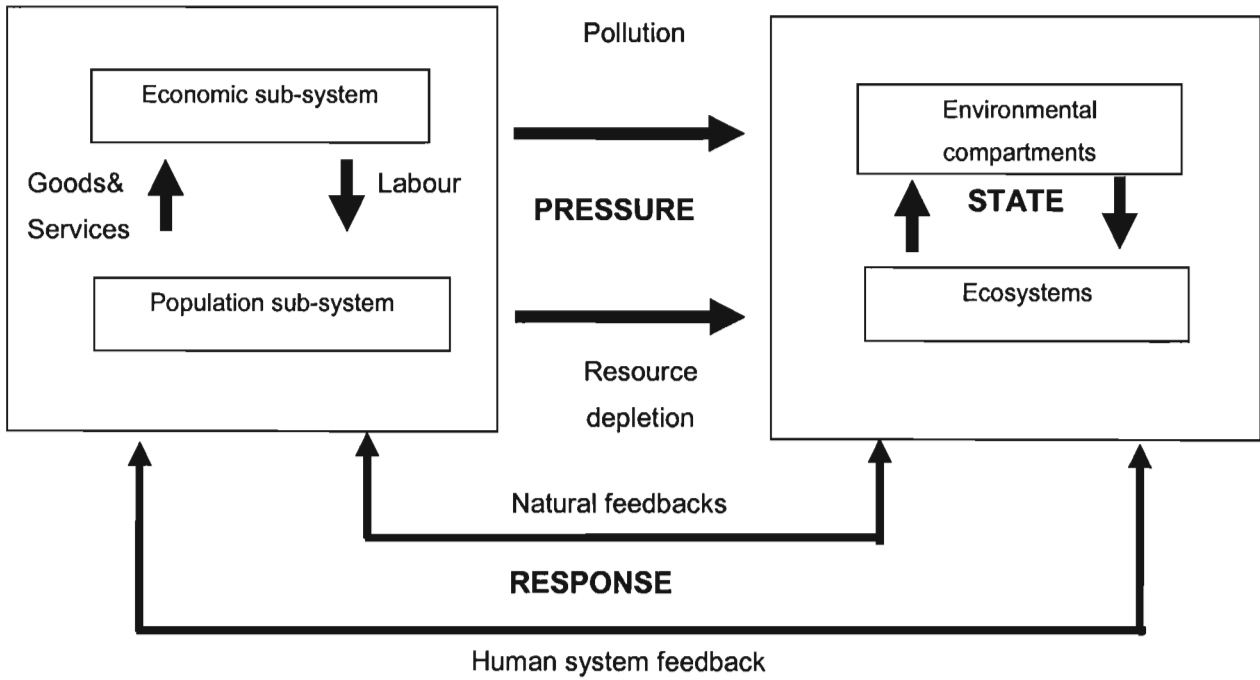
- State

State refers to the condition of the environment resulting from the pressures (e.g. level of air pollution, land degradation or deforestation). The state of the environment will, in turn, affect human health and well-being as well as the socio-economic fabric of society. Knowing both the state of the environment and its indirect effect is critical for decision-makers and the public (CSIR 2002).

- Response

Response corresponds to the societal action taken collectively or individually to ease or prevent negative environmental impacts, correct environmental damage or conserve natural resources. Responses may include regulatory action, environmental or research expenditure, public opinion and consumer preferences, changes in management strategy, and the provision of environmental information. Within this SoE Report the responses were categorized into legislative and policy considerations, International Conventions and Agreements and current initiatives.

This Pressure-State-Response framework can be explained further in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Schematic diagram of the Pressure-State-Response framework (CSIR *et al.*, 2001)**