

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL SOUNDING BOARD**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. The South East England Regional Assembly as the Regional Planning Body for South East England is preparing a draft regional spatial strategy (the South East Plan) for the region.
2. In order to comply with European Directive 2001/42/EEC and national planning policy guidance the Regional Assembly is building strategic environmental appraisal (SEA), sustainability appraisal (SA) and health impact assessment (HIA) into the plan preparation process. These processes are being combined into one integrated SA process that will meet the requirements of SEA, SA and HIA.
3. To aid the SA process, the Assembly is establishing a SA Sounding Board. It will also act as an independent voice in the process. This will ensure that process is seen to be rigorous and open.
4. The Sounding Board will:
  - a. comment on the SA methodology being employed;
  - b. input into the selection and management of consultants undertaking the SA;
  - c. act as consultees during the SA process;
  - d. assist in providing the Assembly with data required for the SA;
  - e. assist in providing the Assembly with commentary and analysis
  - f. where appropriate members of the Sounding Board will attend meetings at which the appraisal is undertaken.
5. The working arrangements of the Sounding Board will be:
  - i. the Sounding Board will be chaired by an independent expert in SA;
  - ii. the Sounding Board will be drawn from the Statutory Environment Bodies and key Regional Stakeholders in the social, economic and environmental fields;
  - iii. the minutes of the meetings will be published on the Regional Assembly's website;
  - iv. the Sounding Board will meet regularly during the appraisal process; and
  - v. the Board will be supported by Assembly staff.