How to use a Strategic Exposure Assessment

Use a Strategic Exposure Assessment (SEA) to identify what a sector development could mean for a decision your organisation needs to make. Allow about 30 minutes for a first pass. Bring the assessment and one live decision.

1 Start with the decision

Write the choice and deadline. For example, “Should we qualify a second supplier before renewing our contract?” Check the SEA’s publication date, evidence cut-off where stated, geography and scope. Pick one finding that could change your answer.

2 Trace how it reaches your organisation

Follow the finding through a dependency you can name, such as a material, supplier, location, contract or customer. Trace wider effects only as far as they change a decision. For each step, record the evidence and the assumption that connects it to the next step.

3 Check your evidence and blind spots

Compare the sector finding with your own records, such as orders, stock, contractual terms and lead times. Identify the unknown you can check next. Ask what your current records might hide, such as two suppliers relying on the same upstream source.

4 Compare what you can do

Include the current course and a smaller or reversible action. Compare cost, time, operational disruption and what each option keeps open. Where uncertainty is hard to resolve in time, consider a staged commitment and an agreed review point.

5 Agree when to act

Write down what would make you proceed, pause or switch. Assign an owner, an evidence check and a date. Use the companion **One-page decision brief** to record the result for your team.

Worked example

A manufacturer is deciding whether to qualify a second supplier for a specialist component. This example is illustrative. Use thresholds that reflect your actual exposure and tolerance for disruption.

Follow the potential exposure

A sector assessment flags potential upstream capacity pressure. If the manufacturer's supplier uses the affected process, lead times might extend. Late components could disrupt the production schedule and, in turn, affect customer delivery dates and cash receipts. Each link needs its own evidence.

Find the missing evidence

Verify recent order dates against receipts, check protection under the contract and ask both suppliers where the critical process is performed. A plausible blind spot is that both suppliers rely on the same subcontractor.

Compare the choices

Option	Trade-off to check
Stay with the current supplier	Avoid qualification cost. Check whether stock and contract provisions cover a credible disruption.
Begin limited qualification	Spend a small amount on samples and tests now. Confirm the alternative route really is independent before paying for full qualification.
Qualify and allocate a share of orders	Build an active second source. Compare the benefit with the cost of testing, minimum volumes and running two suppliers.

Set the trigger

Ask Procurement to confirm independent upstream capacity and Operations to compare available stock with realistic lead times before contract renewal. Begin limited qualification if projected cover falls below your agreed buffer. Revisit the decision if both suppliers prove to share the same constraint.

If you would like to discuss your decision with Reflex IT Marketing, share its outline at info@reflexitmarketing.com.