



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Directorate I - Environment
I.2 - Environmental technologies

R&I Workshop

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Research Findings in Support of Policy Assessment

The European Union recognizes sustainable development as an overarching goal. At the Rio+20 conference in June 2012, together with other States, it renewed its commitment to sustainable development and to promote an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future. Green economy has been recognized as a means to this objective.

Europe2020 is already framed under the overall objective of achieving a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The simultaneous attention to the economy, the environment and the society is equally reflected in Horizon2020, where the contribution of research and innovation to sustainable development is emphasised. Indeed, in the Commission proposal it is stated that all challenges should contribute to the overarching objective of sustainable development.

Effective sustainable policies require sound basis. In general, Impact Assessment (IA) is acknowledged as an important means of policy making. It provides for the integration of scientific evidence into the policy process by informing decision-makers of the likely impacts of proposed measures to tackle identified problems.

The link between (IA) and sustainable development is rooted in the 2006 Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy. Article 11 of this Strategy emphasises that all major policies have to be based on proposals that have undergone high quality IA, assessing in a balanced way the social, environmental and economic dimension.

Also in recognition of the above, the Commission impact assessment follows an integrated approach which was introduced in 2002. It assesses the potential impacts of new legislation or policy proposals in economic (including competitiveness), social and environmental fields. The Commission approach to IAs is grounded in the concept of a balanced and comprehensive assessment of policies in these three areas.

A Special Report of the Court of Auditors of 2010¹ indicates that the Commission's IA work is perceived as balanced. Nevertheless, an analysis of the Commission's IA reports over the period 2003-2008 shows an asymmetry between the three pillars and between costs and benefits, with a relatively lower attention put on environmental impacts than on economic and social impacts. This might reflect the circumstance that not all types of impacts are equally relevant for any particular initiative. Also, with regard to the environmental impacts it

¹ European Court of Auditors special Report No3 "Impact Assessments in the EU institutions: do they support decision-making?", 2010, ISBN 1831-0834

appears more difficult to quantify or monetize costs and benefits. The 2012 Report of the Impact Assessment Board further noted weaknesses in some cases in the scope and depth of analysis of environmental impacts, including lack of quantification. This seems to remain an aspect that has the potential for further improvement.

Purpose of the workshop

Under its framework programmes, the EU-funded research has been looking at Sustainability Assessment, as a means for better policy formulation. The results of FP-funded projects have contributed to advance the literature in this area, inside and outside the Commission context².

Building on the work of some IA-related projects managed within the Environment Directorate of DG Research and Innovation, a workshop is being organized to engage different stakeholders in a discussion on what is available in the landscape of IA, with a focus on its environmental pillar.

The objective of the workshop is to exchange information and knowledge about IA with a view to reinforce the environmental analysis under the overarching umbrella of sustainable development. In particular, the workshop aims at sharing information on tools and methodology for policy impact assessment, bridging the perspective of IA researchers, developers and final users.

From the perspective of the research community, the event offers an opportunity to present the outcomes of their research while at the same time having an opportunity to feed their future work with the perspective of different stakeholders participating in the workshop.

For the EC staff participating in the workshop, the objective is twofold:

- to learn about potentially useful new tools that could support and strengthen existing IA methodologies;
- to take stock of possible research needs in this area in support of the definition of possible research programmes/activities in the future.

The workshop results can also feed the current discussions around DG R&I transition to a more policy-oriented DG and also monitoring the Horizon2020 contribution to sustainability.

Expected outcomes

The workshop is expected to address mostly operational aspects of IA. Depending on the stakeholder groups, the expected workshop's outcomes can be summarized as follows:

- To discuss through a participatory approach knowledge gaps as the basis for the definition of a research agenda shared among the scientific communities and coordinated with users and interest groups.
- To learn about existing tools and methods that could help improving the environmental analysis of existing IA methodologies.

² See for instance OECD Sustainable Development Studies, CONDUCTING SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENTS – ISBN-978-92-64-04725-9 © OECD 2008



WORKSHOP AGENDA

15 April 2013 – CDMA Building, SDR2 - 21 Rue du Champ de Mars, 1050 Brussels

MORNING SESSION

- 9:30 – 9:40** **Opening remarks**
*Andrea TILCHE [TBC], Acting Director, Dir. I
EC DG Research and Innovation*
- 9:40 – 10:00** **Impact assessment at the Commission**
*Robertus SCHARRENBORG, Policy Officer, Unit C.2
EC Secretariat General*
- 10:00 – 10:20** **Sustainability in the EU: why is IA important?**
*Petra KLEININGER, Policy Officer, Unit F.1
EC DG Environment*
- 10:20 – 10:30** **Research for sustainable development**
*Luisa PRISTA, Head of Unit I.2
EC DG Research and Innovation*
- 10:30 – 10:45** **Coffee break**
- 10:45 – 11:30** **Discussion session 1: IA for research policy**
Moderator: *Owen WHITE, Collingwood Environmental Planning*
Views from:
- *Peter FISCH [TBC], Head of Unit A.5
EC DG Research and Innovation*
 - *Katharina HELMING, Co-ordinator Impact Assessment
and International Affairs ZALF, LIAISE project*
 - *Michal MIEDZINSKI [TBC]
Technopolis*
- 11:30 – 12:00** **Stocktaking analysis of needs emerging from the
FP6&FP7 experience**
*Aranka PODHORA, Research Group Impact Assessment, ZALF
LIAISE project*
- 12:00 – 12:45** **Discussion session 2: Reinforcing the
environmental pillar of IA: a research perspective**
Moderator: *Owen WHITE, Collingwood Environmental Planning*
Views from:
- *Zsolt PATAKI, Scientific Officer, Unit A.3
Joint Research Centre*
 - *Katharina HELMING, Co-ordinator Impact Assessment
and International Affairs ZALF, LIAISE project*

AFTERNOON SESSION

14:00 – 17:00 Cross-fertilization of knowledge between projects

Part I - Project presentations

- *Klaus JACOB – LIAISE*
Research Director, Environmental Policy Research Centre
- *Anna LEDIN - VISION RD4SD*
Secretary General, The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning
- *Alex MARTINELLI [TBC]- FP7-4-SD.eu*
Head of the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability
- *Philipp SCHEPELMANN – EmInInn*
Project Co-ordinator, Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment, Energy
- *Michal MIEDZINSKI – Technopolis*
- *Arno BEHRENS – APRAISE*
Head of Energy & Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies

Part II - Discussion on synergies and complementarities between projects

Part III - Group exercise