



15-17 June 2005
Impact Assessment for a New Europe and Beyond
EASY-ECO Manchester Conference
United Kingdom

AFFILIATED EVENTS:

21 Sept-1 Oct 2005	Bratislava, Slovakia	EASY-ECO Training
25 Jan-3 Feb 2006	Szentendre, Hungary	EASY-ECO Training
12-16 Oct 2006	Saarbrücken, Germany	Conference „Evaluation as performance assessment“
16-25 May 2007	Brasov, Romania	EASY-ECO Training
5-14 Sept 2007	Mogilany, Poland	EASY-ECO Training
22-26 Nov 2007	Vienna, Austria	Conference „Evaluation as learning process“

Impact Assessment for a New Europe and Beyond

The expansion of the European Union to embrace its ten new member states, along with new neighbourhood initiatives with other countries to the east and south, and economic partnerships with developing countries, are occurring in parallel with significant new developments in public policy formulation and decision-making. These include greater emphasis on evidence-based decision-making, better governance and governance reform, and the adoption of sustainable development as the overarching objective for public policy.

Impact assessment (or evaluation) is playing an increasingly important role in all these areas. This applies to the European Commission itself, to national governments, local government, NGOs and the private sector, in EU member states and beyond.

A key aim of this conference is to develop greater understanding of how different forms of impact assessment or evaluation can work together as an integrated whole, with the specific aim of strengthening European sustainable development as an integrated concept - locally, nationally, across the entire 25 member Union, and on to partnerships with other countries and to the EU's contribution to global governance.

What lessons can be learned from experience in each field of application that are relevant to others? What techniques developed in different areas can be applied successfully in others? In what ways do approaches need to be different in different areas, in order to meet specific needs, and to complement each other in their separate contributions to an overall goal? Can common principles be identified which help to achieve this?

All new EC directives and major policy initiatives are now subject to the Commission's recently introduced procedures for preliminary and extended impact assessments.

The EU has commissioned sustainability impact assessments of trade policy, both for WTO agreements and for regional trade agreements in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Its directive on strategic environmental assessment is now in force, requiring SEAs of development plans in all member states, as well as the earlier directive for environmental impact assessment of development projects.



Most member state governments have introduced regulatory impact assessment procedures for their own policy-making processes, and candidate countries are being encouraged and helped to do the same. The EC's development assistance programmes and those of member states, as well as the EU's internal structural funds, are also subject to impact assessment or evaluation procedures, including *ex-post* assessment of the effectiveness of the assistance given. Similar techniques are being used by local governments through Local Agenda 21 initiatives, and by private sector corporations in sustainability reporting and environmental management systems.

This increasing use of impact assessment as a tool for strengthening public policy-making and its integration with corporate responsibility presents many challenges. The need for better evidence in decision-making, for greater civil society involvement in governance, and for closer alignment of policy with the goal of sustainable development, is well understood in principle, but less readily applied in practice. Innovative techniques are required, the accumulating experience needs to be shared, and a greater degree of coherence needs to be developed. In many areas, policy-making processes themselves need to be adapted, to make more effective use of the evolving techniques.

Participants

The conference will bring together policy-makers, impact assessment and evaluation practitioners, commissioning agents, senior academics and young researchers from throughout the European Union and other countries, to share their experiences and gain greater insight into the prospects and challenges of strengthening sustainable development in the European region and beyond, through impact assessment approaches.

Case Studies

We are very much interested in case studies from evaluators or commissioners. There will also be space available for poster presentations.

An Invitation for Papers

The Manchester conference will set the scene for the remainder of the EASY-ECO 2005-2007 conference series, by addressing in particular the **strategic issues of impact assessment for sustainable development**.

Papers are sought on theory, practice and specific experience in all areas of strategic impact assessment, particularly those from which lessons may be learned in the wider context.

Fields of application include:

- national and regional strategies and policies for sustainable development
- EU policy, directives and international agreements (IA, extended IA, sustainability IA)
- national legislation and policy-making (regulatory IA)
- regional, sectoral and local planning (implementation and integration of the SEA Directive)
- EU structural funds and agricultural funds (especially in new member states)
- Local Agenda 21 activities, urban and rural development programmes
- corporate sustainability and corporate responsibility
- development assistance programmes

Techniques of current interest include: integrated assessment; optimisation techniques such as cost-benefit analysis and multi-criteria analysis; quality standards; indicators; monitoring and policy adaptation; attribution of effects at the strategic level.

Contextual issues that may be addressed include: integration into policy-making processes; institutional transformation and capacity-building; identification of goals and needs; stakeholder identification and involvement; evaluation culture and strategies to enhance it; expert networks,



evaluation societies and other networking possibilities (particularly in relation to new member states and neighbouring countries).

Abstracts should be received by the organisers by **15th February 2005** and full papers by **8th April 2005**.

The conference is being organised by the Impact Assessment Research Centre in the University of Manchester's School of Environment and Development.

For further details on the conference's aims and the submission of papers, please contact:

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The conference is part of the EASY-ECO 2005-2007 series of conferences and training courses. For further details of EASY-ECO and the seven research institutions involved, please see the EASY-ECO Website <http://www.sustainability.at/easy>

Further Information and Bookings

The conference will run across three days in Manchester with a maximum attendance of 100 delegates. It will centre on plenary and parallel sessions with a mixture of papers and topical discussion. Plans are underway for a book and/or special issue of a suitable journal, that draws on a collection of papers presented at the conference.

Venue: Chancellors Conference Centre is within easy access of Manchester city centre, in the grounds of the Victorian residence previously occupied by University Vice-Chancellors. The original building is incorporated into the modern conference and hotel facilities.

In order to book a place, please fill in the online booking form at

<http://www.sustainability.at/easy>

If you do not have access to the internet, please contact Debrah Whitehead, Tel: +44 (0)161 275 2821, Fax: +44 (0)161 273 8829, debra.whitehead@manchester.ac.uk

Grants from the European Commission are available for young researchers. The grants cover travel expenses, participation fees, accommodation and living allowance. For more information on how to apply please consult the EASY-ECO Website. ***Additional sponsorships to extend this funding will be welcomed.***