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Assessment tools for sustainable policy measures in Europe

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 SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME



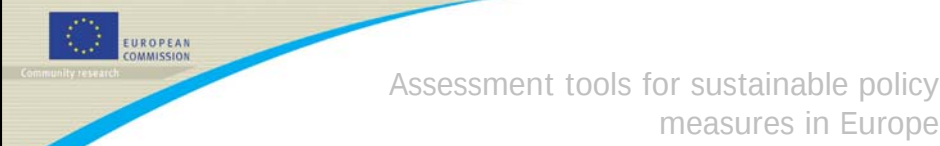
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Assessment tools for sustainable policy measures in Europe

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1. Introduction and purpose
2. How does SD fit into EU policy-making?
3. Criteria for evaluating the use IA tools
4. Key findings
5. Challenges to researchers and policy-makers

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1. Introduction

SD, an integrating concept?

- Policy-makers are confronted with complexity of a future that holds an array of possibilities.
- How to deal with this uncertainty and to anticipate undesired developments (poverty, biodiversity loss, etc.)?
- SD, **as a concept**, provides **challenging opportunities**.
- Although SD is currently widely applied in research and policy, it still remains questionable whether there is a shared and common accepted understanding.

Contested implementation

- Growing awareness and agreement what to avoid (SD = implicit goal).
- No common practice/guidance for action.



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1. Introduction

Purpose of this presentation

- To provide a balanced account of the potentialities as well as of the difficulties of the current EU practices aimed at generating and integrating knowledge relevant for sustainability-oriented policy measures and in particular within the context of the Impact Assessment (IA) procedures.
- Based on a scoping study set up to evaluate and compare 15 different IA exercises (formal and more experimental research exercises) concerning natural resources, biodiversity, energy, agriculture and trade.
- Desk research and interviews with different **users** involved, including researchers and EC policy officers.





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2. How does SD fit into EU policy-making?

IA: example of policy architecture in practice

Communication in 2002 replacing and integrating all sectoral assessments with the aim to improve the quality and coherence of the policy process (incl. better regulation)

IA system operational since 2005/2006 including further support:

strategic level: renewed EU SDS* and FP7 : high degree of coordination

research projects: SustA-test, IQ tools, SiaMet, Matisse, Evia, Sensor, etc.

reviews and initiatives: such as the IA Guidelines, training and IA Board

* Improve quality of life now and in the future and ensuring prosperity,
environmental protection and social cohesion via key challenges: Climate change and clean energy, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, better management of natural resources, public health, social inclusion, demography and migration, fighting global poverty.



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3. Criteria of evaluating the use of IA tools

Scoping study on 'use IA tools'

- Spring 2008, 15 cases, 10 interviews
- 2 communities: (a) **policy-makers**, i.e. desk officers within the EC
(b) **researchers** 'who are supposed to provide scientific knowledge via theories and methodologies and/or supporting practice via IA methods and studies'.
- 3 criteria

Criteria + Description		Questions
RELEVANCY 'How closely connected or appropriate are IA of the EC and novel IA policy cases to the renewed EU SDS.'	Key challenges of EU SDS SCOPE [7 key challenges]	How pertinent, appropriate and useful are IA and the use of tools as aid to policy-making with reference to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy?
	SD pillars [Assessment of the Social, Economic and Environmental Dimensions] TRADE-OFFS	Does the assessment provide relevant information that corresponds to the analytical needs of the European Commission?
		Is the IA evaluating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of SD in a balanced way, taking into account international dimensions of SD and the cost of inaction?





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3. Criteria of evaluating the use of IA tools

Criteria + Description		Questions
ACCURACY <i>'The quality or state of being exact or precise and correct in all detail, of being capable of, or successful in reaching the intended target.'</i>	Data EVIDENCE [EC and EU agencies are a prime source of sound scientific advice.]	What type of data is being provided? Does the degree of detail fit with the scope of the IA? How is the data generated and presented?
	Models TOOLS	What types of models are being applied? How recent are they? Are the models well established within scientific community and accepted by the policy-makers?
	Institutes	Who has contributed to the IA?
LEGITIMACY <i>'The extent to which the IA conforms to a given standard (= EU SDS and EC IA Guidelines).'</i>	Methodology PARADIGM GOAL PROCESS/ TIMING	How is the IA being conceptualised? Does the practice comply with the European Commission IA guidelines? Is there a balance between qualitative and quantitative approach? Is there external involvement (consultants, research institutes)?
	Participation of stakeholders and civil society in the assessment	Who is contributing to the IA? Are stakeholders involved from different target groups with a broad range of backgrounds?
	Consultation in the outcomes STAKEHOLDERS	What type's consultations tools are being employed?

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4. Key findings

Broad variety of established initiatives linking to several SD challenges

- 3 framework criteria proofed to be useful
- IA system in the EC on the fore front (research, IA guidelines, IA board)
- Broad application, however still limited in time (2006 - 2010)

Recognition of the limits of current practice in both communities

- No common accepted practice based on sound theoretical underpinnings
- Limited scope formal IA's to anticipate unsustainable developments
- Research providing only partial/confusing/black box information, still not specific or salient for actual policy questions

Fragmentation and limited interaction

- 'Orphan' tools
- Limited cross-fertilisation and learning



5. Challenges to researchers & policy-makers

Shared responsibility

- Most practice based on set of theories, however, the connection other direction traditionally being ignored
- Overemphasis on politics = incremental change, polarisation
- Overemphasis on science = potential risk to not identify what is important and social acceptable to sustain

IA provides a mean for

- Collaboration of different communities of practice (equal arguments ?)
- To go beyond supply approach of science (willingness and competences ?)
- Cross-fertilisation and learning opportunities (research on use of tools ?)
- Providing a solid foundation for sustainable policy measures in Flanders (?)

Thank you for your attention!

More information at EC Research website for SD

http://ec.europa/research/sd/tools_en.html

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