

EvAluation of Sustainability

European COnferences & Training Courses

The EASY-ECO 2005-2007 Series is sponsored by



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Sustainable Development: From vision to practice

Since the Brundtland Report was published in 1987, sustainable development evolved from a vague vision to a set of basic principles, guiding decisions and actions on various levels. Countries, for example, are developing and implementing strategies for sustainable development in order to reshape their policies accordingly. Thousands of municipalities worldwide are engaged in Local Agenda 21 activities, which address sustainable development on the local level. More than 60.000 businesses of all scales have introduced environmental management systems or publish sustainability reports as response to stakeholder demands and in order to create long-term competitiveness. As a consequence, sustainable development plays an increasingly important role also for investors. These various actors have one point in common: they all call for reliable information on sustainability performance. The only solid way of generating it is through professional evaluation, i.e. neutral and based on facts.



EASY-ECO 2002-2003: Two successful EU conferences

In 2002 and 2003 the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration hosted two EU conferences* on "Evaluation of Sustainability". More than 200 outstanding academics, young researchers, evaluators and contractors from 25 European countries, the US and Canada participated. For the first time, the conferences provided a European-wide overview of various approaches and methodologies of evaluation in the context of sustainable development.

* (Supported by the European Commission, Research DG, Human Potential Program, High-Level Scientific Conferences. Contract No. HPCF-CT-2001-00286, <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/conferences/home.htm>)

EASY-ECO 2005-2007: The new challenge

In numerous EU member countries, evaluation is hampered by the lack of adequate educational opportunities. In most EU new member states evaluation is moreover not yet part of their political culture. The targets of EASY-ECO 2005-2007 can be summarised as follows:

- It disseminates theoretical knowledge and practical experience among European experts.
- It provides a modular hands-on education in sustainability evaluation to young researchers, which is unique in Europe.
- It increases capacities for sustainability evaluations, especially in EU new member states.
- It gives contractors and evaluators an overview on evaluation methods and products available, i.e. it increases market transparency.
- It promotes networking and professional exchange among researchers and practitioners.

Evaluation of Sustainable Development: A cutting-edge topic

Professional evaluations, which are based on scientifically tested concepts and methods, provide decision makers in the public and the private sector with reliable information. They document drawbacks as well as progress and they identify related barriers and success factors. By doing so, they also support learning processes in a systematic way. However, evaluating sustainable development confronts both contractors as well as evaluators with new challenges.



EASY-ECO 2005-2007: The events

EASY-ECO-2005-2007 is a series of seven conferences and training courses, which are scheduled to take place in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and the UK. About 600 academics and practitioners from all over Europe are expected to participate. EU-funding will be available for young researchers.

Date	Type	Location	Organized by
15 - 17 June 2005	1 st Conference	Manchester, UK	University of Manchester
21 - 30 Sept 2005	1 st Training Course	Bratislava, Slovakia	REC Slovakia
25 Jan - 3 Feb 2006	2 nd Training Course	Szentendre, Hungary	REC Hungary
11 - 14 Oct 2006	2 nd Conference	Saarbrücken, Germany	Saarland University
16 - 25 May 2007	3 rd Training Course	Brasov, Romania	National Centre for Sustainable Development
5 - 14 Sept 2007	4 th Training Course	Krakow, Poland	Sendzimir Foundation
Feb/March 2008	3 rd Conference	Vienna, Austria	Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration

The series of events facilitates a continuous exchange of experience on fields of application such as

- national strategies and policies for sustainable development
- EU structural funds and agricultural funds (especially in EU new member states)
- Local Agenda 21 activities, urban and rural development programs
- corporate sustainability and corporate responsibility
- development assistance

and on methodological issues such as

- sustainability impact assessment
- optimization techniques, such as cost-benefit analysis
- statistical and econometric measures, such as multi-criteria analysis
- quality standards and indicators for evaluations

As the challenge of capacity building is most significant in EU new member states, their needs will play a prominent role throughout the series of events.



EASY-ECO 2005-2007 is organised under the EU 6th Framework Programme Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action. As the realisation of the project requires additional funding, further institutional sponsors will be welcomed.

An International Team

EASY-ECO 2005-2007 will be organised by an international group of well established research institutions.

Research Institute for Managing Sustainability

Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Co-ordinator of EASY-ECO)

PO-Box 37, 1091 Vienna, Austria
Contact: Ursula Kopp, André Martinuzzi
 Tel. +43-(0)1-31336-4698
 E-mail: ursula.kopp@wu-wien.ac.at
<http://www.sustainability.at>

CEval - Center for Evaluation Saarland University

PO-Box 151150, 66041 Saarbruecken, Germany
Contact: Wolfgang Meyer
 Tel. +49-(0)681-302-3320
 E-mail: w.meyer@mx.uni-saarland.de
<http://www.ceval.de>

IISD - International Institute for Sustainable Development

161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor
 Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3B 0Y4
Contact: Peter Hardi
 Tel. +1-204-958-7700
 E-mail: info@iisd.ca
<http://www.iisd.org>

IDPM - Institute for Development Policy and Management University of Manchester

Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, UK
Contact: Clive George
 Tel. +44-161-275-0812 / -0811
 E-mail: clive.george@man.ac.uk
<http://idpm.man.ac.uk>

REC - Hungary The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

Ady Endre ut. 9-11, 2000, Szentendre, Hungary
Contact: Eva Csobod
 Tel: +36-26-504-076
 E-mail: Eva.Csobod@rec.org
<http://www.rec.hu>

The Sendzimir Foundation, Poland

ulica Konarskiego 21a
 30-049 Krakow, Poland
Contact: Tomasz Bergier
 Tel. +48-12-634-29-14
 E-mail: tbergier@agh.edu.pl
<http://www.sendzimir.org.pl>

National Centre for Sustainable Development (NCSd)

Str. Alexandru Philippide 15
 Sector 2, Bucuresti, 702593, Romania
Contact: Tania Mihiu
 Tel: +4021-201-1410
 E-mail: tania.mihu@sdnp.ro
<http://www.sdnp.ro>

REC Slovakia

Vysoká 18
 811 06 Bratislava
Contact: James Grellier
 Tel: +421-2-5263-2942
 E-mail: rec@changenet.sk
<http://www.rec.sk>

