

EASY-ECO Brussels Conference 2010

17-19 November 2010

Sustainable Development Evaluations in Europe: From a Decade of Practices, Politics and Science to Emerging Demands

Call for papers

This event is sponsored by



MARIE CURIE ACTIONS

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Status: October 2009

EASY-ECO - Evaluation of Sustainability European Conferences and Trainings

EASY-ECO is a conference and training programme on evaluation in the specific context of sustainable development (*SD evaluation or sustainability evaluation*). Several European top-class research institutions are collaborating with the common aim of building SD evaluation capacity (for further details please see www.easy-eco.eu). The previous EASY-ECO conferences have dealt with numerous themes within SD evaluation such as impact assessment, the strategic and project levels of SD evaluation, policy learning processes and evaluation capacity, as well as evaluating Corporate Social Responsibility strategies and involvement of stakeholders.

Thematic outline

The 2010 EASY-ECO conference in Brussels will firmly focus on the European perspective of evaluation of sustainable development, taking stock of almost a decade of the EASY-ECO programme and SD evaluation practice at EU- and national levels in order to identify – with important European actors – the challenges ahead. Considerable efforts have been devoted to the development of methods and capacities for SD evaluations by practitioners, the academia and institutional actors, resulting in the build-up of considerable capacity for SD evaluation in various domains. The 2002 decision of the EU Commission to implement a systematic integrated assessment procedure illustrates that SD evaluation has reached a position at the heart of decision-making processes as well as a position directly exposed to difficult trade-offs. Europe, as an institutional level and as a space for diffusion of innovative principles and practices across the EU member states and beyond, is the adequate focus to explore the challenges ahead: methods and tools, institutionalization processes, participation

and collaboration of various actors (from evaluation practitioners and institutional to civil society and scientific actors) in evaluation studies and systems.

The primary aim of the conference is to highlight critical insights gained through the development and implementation of almost a decade of SD evaluation: What are the remaining methodological and policy challenges related to the European Commission's Impact Assessment (CEC-IA) procedure? How is SD integrated into various EU-level evaluation procedures (e.g. EU Structural Funds, IA of trade measures and agreements, work of the European Court of Auditors)? What is the role of the different actors in the CEC-IA (e.g. EU Parliament, European Court of Auditors, stakeholders)? Being the last of the EASY-ECO 2008-2010 series of events, **the Brussels conference also aims to explore the future of SD evaluation, and in particular the current challenges and forthcoming demands, the expectations, uses and effects related to SD evaluation:** Who are the effective and potential users of SD evaluations? What types of uses have been made of SD evaluations? Which effects of SD evaluations are expected and which are achieved? How does SD evaluation support actors in managing competing agendas? Will reorienting SD evaluation towards integrated evaluation make a difference?



Invitation for contributions

We encourage

- researchers from all disciplines (including young researchers),
- professionals from related fields of work,
- commissioning agents, and
- evaluation users and other stakeholders

to submit abstracts for presentations at the EASY-ECO Brussels Conference 2010 that touch on the themes of European SD evaluation experience and upcoming challenges as outlined above until 15 May 2010. Submissions can address one or more of the key topics outlined below in general terms or in the context of a case study. European perspectives are particularly welcome, including local or national perspectives which shed light on the problems and practices of the European level. Please indicate in your abstract which topic you want to address with your contribution.

Key topics

SD evaluation in Europe: state-of-the-art in integrating SD evaluation into policy-making processes?

- SD evaluation in the policy-making process: How is sustainability evaluation integrated at the EU level and in the various evaluation procedures (e.g. structural funds, IA trade, European Court of Auditors)?
- Tools and instruments for the European Commission's Impact Assessment (CEC-IA): What are the methodological and policy challenges related the European Commission's Impact Assessment procedure?
- SD and the evaluation of external dimensions of EU policies: how to assess impacts beyond the European borders?
- SD evaluation and monitoring processes of the EU strategies: SD Strategy, Lisbon Strategy and others.
- Vertical integration for multi-level governance: linking national and the EU-level SD evaluations.

SD evaluation demand for the future: who and what for?

- Horizontal collaboration: What is the role of inter-institutional processes and of the different actors (e.g. EU Parliament, European Court of Auditors, stakeholders) in SD evaluation (and specifically the EC's Impact Assessment)?
- The role of municipalities and regions in advancing SD evaluation practice.
- Diffusion of SD evaluation standards across international institutions.
- Good governance: does SD evaluation strengthen transparency and participation?
- Difficult trade-offs: has SD evaluation contributed to fundamental changes (in the areas of trade policy, structural and cohesion policy, common agriculture policy and others)?

Submission of abstracts and timeline

Participants who wish to present a paper, poster or case should send their abstract by 15 May 2010 to application@easy-eco.eu as well as to Tom Bauler (tbauler@ulb.ac.be).

Please indicate which of the key topics outlined above your contribution addresses. For easier file handling, please send your abstracts as a word-file with the file name „your last name_abstract_Brussels.doc“. Abstracts should not exceed 500 words.

The organizers will inform you about the acceptance of your abstract by **30 August 2010**. This is also the time when we will inform those who have applied for an EU grant about their acceptance.

Full papers (max. 6.000-8.000 words) should be submitted until **15 October 2010**.



Types of contributions

Papers – Are you a researcher or practitioner and want to present interesting findings linked to the topics above? We look for contributions facilitating the exchange of research results, methodological trends, and practical experience. Presenters of papers will be expected to give a presentation of 20 minutes followed by a short discussion. Please send your abstract by **15 May 2010**.

Abstracts and full papers will go into the online proceedings on the EASY-ECO website. Best papers from every previous EASY-ECO conference have been published in the Evaluating Sustainable Development book series by Edward Elgar.

Posters – Conference participants may submit a poster for display at a dedicated space at the conference venue. The posters will be introduced in a poster session. If you would like to submit a poster dealing with a topic relevant for the conference, please provide a poster abstract by **15 May 2010**. The abstract will go into the online proceedings on the EASY-ECO website.

Case studies – Interesting examples of SD evaluations are welcome to be presented as a paper if the case has a strong link to the topics of interest outlined here (case studies without this linkage are welcome as poster presentations)



Registration and grants

To register for the conference please fill in the online form on www.sustainability.eu/easy/?k=application

We recommend an early registration as places are limited.

The conference registration fee will be announced in the coming weeks. However, you might be eligible for an EU grant.

EU grants available!

EASY-ECO is organised under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action. One of the aims of the programme is to enable leading researchers and practitioners share their experience with those who are new to the field. Therefore grants are available for researchers with less than ten years working experience to cover travel expenses, the conference registration fee, accommodation and living allowance. For further details on eligibility and application for EU grants, please see www.sustainability.eu/easy/?k=eugrants.

If you want to apply for an EU grant, please send your CV and a letter of motivation as specified on the website to application@easy-eco.eu as well as to Tom Bauler (tbauler@ulb.ac.be) by **15 May 2010**. The organizers will inform you about the acceptance of your application by **30 August 2010**.

Registration becomes effective after payment of the registration fee or approval of the EU grant only. Bank details will be e-mailed to you after your registration.

Preliminary conference outline

The conference will be held at the following venues: European Parliament; Palais des Sciences; Université Libre de Bruxelles, Campus Solbosch.

The event will feature parallel sessions, plenary talks as well as interactive and participatory group work. Networking and informal discussions with experts and peers will be supported by an attractive social programme.



We are currently negotiating with international top-class SD evaluation experts to join us – please keep visiting www.easy-eco.eu for news on keynote speakers, conference venue, transportation, accommodation and social programme.

The organizers

The conference is organized by the Centre d'Etudes du Développement Durable (CEDD - Center for Studies on Sustainable Development) at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB - Free University of Brussels).

The conference team:

Tom Bauler

Emilie Mutombo

Valentine Van Gameren

For further information, please contact Tom Bauler (tbauler@ulb.ac.be)

For regular updates on the event, please visit www.easy-eco.eu.

As the realisation of the project requires additional funding, further institutional sponsors will be welcomed. Please contact: tbauler@ulb.ac.be.

The coordinator of the series

Since 2002, the **Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS)** at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) has successfully coordinated the EU-project **EASY-ECO - Evaluation of Sustainability** (funded within FP5 and FP6), with five major conferences, five training courses and a book series on SD evaluations as outputs. RIMAS has an extensive experience with sustainability evaluation in research, education and consulting, which is reflected in the interdisciplinary composition of its team, numerous conducted evaluation studies and events at various levels (local/regional, national, international) as well as publications in the field.

