

EASY-ECO Conference

Improving the Quality of Sustainable Development Projects

11 – 14 October 2006

Saarbrücken and Bildungszentrum Kirkel, Saarland / Germany

Sustainable development does not just evolve from itself – it is the result of active political action. Without the implementation of innovative measures in the framework of projects and programmes neither the necessary institutional reforms nor the durable attitude changes necessary for realising the Agenda 21 can be reached. Nevertheless, not all innovations are successful or lead to the desired sustainable effects. The



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main goal of evaluation research on the micro level of projects and programmes is the exploration of these effects, the causes of successes and failures and possibilities of improving the quality of measures.

Sustainable development is a global task to be achieved by local actions. Multi-level policies are required for the coordination of this conjoint acting and learning from difficulties as well as learning about solutions and best practices. The key to common success is knowledge of the effects and communicating this knowledge evidently. Without the development of appropriate scientific methods generating and processing such knowledge, sustainable development remains a utopian objective.

Evaluation of sustainable development is a complex task demanding interdisciplinary team

work. New technical solutions must be developed, tested and implemented, for example to overcome the current waste of non-renewable resources. Technical solutions have to be economically feasible and shaped in a socially acceptable way. Even the most appropriate technical solutions lead nowhere if they do not receive financing and acceptance by the public. Evaluation research decisively contributes to this by directing attention to the technical feasibility, the efficiency of measures and their acceptance and utilisation by target groups.

EASY-ECO 2005-2007

The EASY-ECO 2005-2007 Series comprises three conferences (in the United Kingdom, Germany and Austria) and four training opportunities (in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Poland). More than 600 participants from science, politics and practise are expected. Lingua Franca is English. Thanks to the EU-Grants, junior researchers can apply for the reimbursement of all costs of up to two conferences and one training.

The conference in Saarland

The EASY-ECO 2006 conference in Saarland will showcase activities of sustainable development projects and programmes from all over the world, highlighting their different approaches for measuring both their effects and the sustainability of these. The conference aims at forming a dialogue between science and the practise of evaluation of projects and programmes which foster sustainable development.

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Bucharest, Romania

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Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada



Call for Papers

The organisation committee encourages scientists and decision makers from all disciplines and areas dealing with questions of sustainability to attend the conference and present the outcomes of their research and /or case studies in line with the following workgroup themes:

✓ Evaluation of sustainability communication

Some authors expect the concept of sustainability difficult for mass communication, giving a starting point for a lot of projects to develop communication concepts aiming at different target groups (cf. young people, consumers, landlords, enterprises, the public etc.). The papers expected in this session should address the question, how the impact of such kind of projects can be evaluated and which kinds of problems occur in doing so. Furthermore, the need for new evaluation methods concerning the communication of sustainability will be discussed during the conference.

✓ Nongovernmental Organizations and Sustainable Development

It is the purpose of this section to showcase empirical work that reports and theoretical modeling that outlines the role of citizen participation through NGOs in sustainable development and sustainable community development. This section is particularly interested in empirical work that reports on the impact of Agenda 21/ citizen participation initiatives and sustainable development. This section invites case studies, comparative case studies, and meta-analyses of projects focusing upon a combination of sustainable development, sustainable community development and citizen participation.

✓ Evaluation of Sustainability in Development Cooperation

The concept of sustainability is fiercely discussed in development cooperation. Yet, at the moment, consensus is not in sight. Generally, there is a differentiation between sustainability on the macro level of societies and the level of policies. To reach societal targets and to implement policies, programmes on the micro level are needed. The extent of sustainable impacts of programmes is another subject matter of the debate on sustainability in development cooperation. In this session, the different concepts on both levels are to be discussed and analysed in their consequences for development cooperation.

✓ Monitoring and Evaluation of National Strategies, Programs and Projects for Sustainable Development

This section invites papers on methods for assessing progress in implementing strategies on sustainable development on national as well as on program and project levels. Thus, the session aims on bringing together different methods of monitoring

and evaluation as well as on the possibility of comparing these different methods.

✓ Evaluation of Energy Efficiency

The session focuses on methods for evaluating energy efficiency: Which methods exist already, and how can the quality of assessment procedures evaluating energy efficiency and their contribution to the governance of sustainable development be improved? This includes questions of the integration of social, technical, economic and ecological aspects in evaluations.

✓ Evaluation of programmes and projects on sustainability oriented innovation in private and public enterprises

Innovation is often discussed as one driving factor for sustainability centred development. Technical innovations are mainly based at the level of enterprises. Various programmes try to support enterprises, which develop or implement sustainability oriented innovations. This can be especially process and product innovations for producers and service providers and also system technologies for infrastructure providers. In this workgroup evaluation methods will be discussed how this kind of programmes works, and how their success and effects can be measured.

✓ Evaluation of Regional Development Projects

The key slogan of the 1992 Rio Conference "Think globally, act locally" puts an important task over to the local level and regional planning process. A broad variety of projects has been implemented to improve local activities supporting sustainable development. Among them are, for instance, Local Agenda 21 initiatives to implement new governance structures, rural development plans to combine agriculture with natural protection and the adaption of forestry management practises to other parts of national management. This section invites all kinds of papers related to evaluation of such kind of regional development initiatives.

✓ Systems thinking-influenced approaches for the evaluation of sustainable development projects and programmes

This session explores questions such as: What is the relevance and applicability of systems thinking to evaluations dealing with sustainable development? What contributions can systems thinking make and what are the difficulties and pitfalls of transferring it into the evaluation practice for sustainable development projects and programs? Which insights can be gained from evaluations using approaches with systems thinking characteristics (such as Outcome Mapping, the Most Significant Change Technique, ...)?

Submission Process

Besides the above outlined sections the organizers welcome papers from all fields concerning evaluation and sustainable development.

Abstracts can be submitted until **March 13, 2006**. Authors will be informed about the acceptance of their abstracts by **March 17, 2006**. Full papers should be received by the organisers by June 30, 2006. Please send your abstracts per e-mail in **pdf-format** (500 words) to the local organizers (easy@ceval.de) and a copy to Markus Hametner (markus.hametner@wu-wien.ac.at) and please fill in the online booking form at <http://www.sustainability.at/easy/?k=eugrants>

The Venue

The training center in Kirkel (www.bildungszentrum-kirkel.de) was established by the "Chamber of Work" (*Arbeitskammer des Saarlandes*, www.arbeitskammer.de) in 1956. Yearly, about 20,000 employees are being trained in the *Bildungszentrum*. The building's agreeable learning atmosphere is being used for a number of different events by the *Arbeitskammer* as well as by unions, political parties, foundations and companies.

Though being placed in the open countryside, the venue's transport connections are extraordinary, for example through the highly frequented railroad between Saarbrücken and Homburg. The car park is free of charge. Technically, the venue's brilliantly equipped. Last but not least, the kitchen enjoys a very good reputation, even outside Saarland.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the *Bildungszentrum* is almost a role model for ecological working. For example, no small packages are being used for the meals. The complete waste is being separately disposed. The water of all 76 rooms is heated by a solar energy, clearly reducing the waste of energy. The venue possesses a biotope and a nature trail, on which a forester offers forest walks to the participants of seminars.



The local organizer

The Centrum for Evaluation is an academic institute affiliated to the University of the Saarland. It contributes to the development of evaluation research and to intensifying the implementation and usage of evaluations. It contributes to the further development of evaluation research and to the reinforced implementation and usage of evaluations by

- ✓ formulating theoretical and methodological foundations and subject-related academic standards for the evaluation of programs and projects
- ✓ providing education and continuing education for target groups working on evaluations (researchers, consultants, users etc.)
- ✓ consulting public and private organizations on their evaluations
- ✓ implementing evaluations
- ✓ promoting professional information exchange
- ✓ arranging conventions, meetings and workshops

For further information please visit www.ceval.de.



Application Process

The registration for participating at the conference will not be open before March 01, 2006 to make sure that those who present a paper will have priorities to apply for EU-Grants (see below). The presentation of a paper increases the chance of getting a grant, however, it is not mandatory.

- March 13, 2006: Deadline for abstracts
- March 17, 2006: Notification of accepted abstracts
- March 30, 2006: Beginning of early bird registration
- March 30, 2006: Preliminary conference programme announced
- May 31, 2006: End of early bird registration
- June 30, 2006: Deadline for full papers
- July 15, 2006: Announcement final programme
- September 30, 2006: End of registration
- October 11-14, 2006: Conference

Minor changes are possible. We recommend an early registration as there will be only limited places, especially for those applying for a EU-grant for young researchers covering travel expenses, participation fees, accommodation and living allowance.



Registration fee

EASY-ECO 2005-2007 is organised under the European Community's Sixth Framework Programme Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses action. One of the aims of the programme is to enable the experience of leading researchers and practitioners to be shared with those who are new to the field. **Grants are available for researchers with less than ten years experience, to cover travel expenses, participation fees, accommodation and living allowance.** For further details on eligibility for EU-Grants, please see the EASY-ECO website <http://www.sustainability.at/easy>.

Students, Members of evaluation societies: 600 €

Early registration: 700 €

Regular fee: 900 €

Payment includes: Accommodation, conference fee (300 €), lunch and dinner, refreshments, reception at the Saarbrücken Castle, all transports and excursions in Saarland.

Further Information and Bookings

The conference 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. A publication on the first EASY-ECO conference held at the University of Manchester (15 – 17 June 2005) will be presented at the conference in Saarbrücken.

All information concerning the conference is also available on www.ceval.de/easyeco.

Latest information on the conference in Saarland will be in English on the official EASY-ECO website. The registration for the conference and the application form for the EU-Grant takes place on the on the official EASY-ECO website (www.sustainability.at/easy).

For further questions on the EASY-ECO conference in Saarland, please contact:

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On EASY-ECO

EASY-ECO ("Evaluation of Sustainability: European Conferences and Training Courses") was launched by the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration.

The main objectives of EASY-ECO 2005-2007 are

- ✓ the dissemination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience among European experts
- ✓ provision of a modular hands-on education in sustainability evaluations to 160 young researchers
- ✓ increasing capacities for sustainability evaluations, especially in the new EU member states
- ✓ giving contractors and evaluators an overview on evaluation methods and products available, i.e. increasing market transparency
- ✓ the promotion of networking and professional exchange among researchers and practitioners

Further information on EASY-ECO and the possibilities of applying for EU-Grants can be found on the official EASY-ECO website (www.sustainability.at/easy). There, you might as well register for a training course in Brasov / Romania or Mogilany / Poland, or subscribe to a free newsletter, informing you on current developments and results of the project.

EU-Grants are available for two conferences and a training. Depending on the demand for EU-Grants for the conference in Saarbrücken, young researchers can apply for the reimbursement of all costs for

- visiting the conference in Saarbrücken
- participating in a training in Brasov or Mogilany and
- presenting a paper at the final EASY-ECO conference in Vienna (November 2007).

