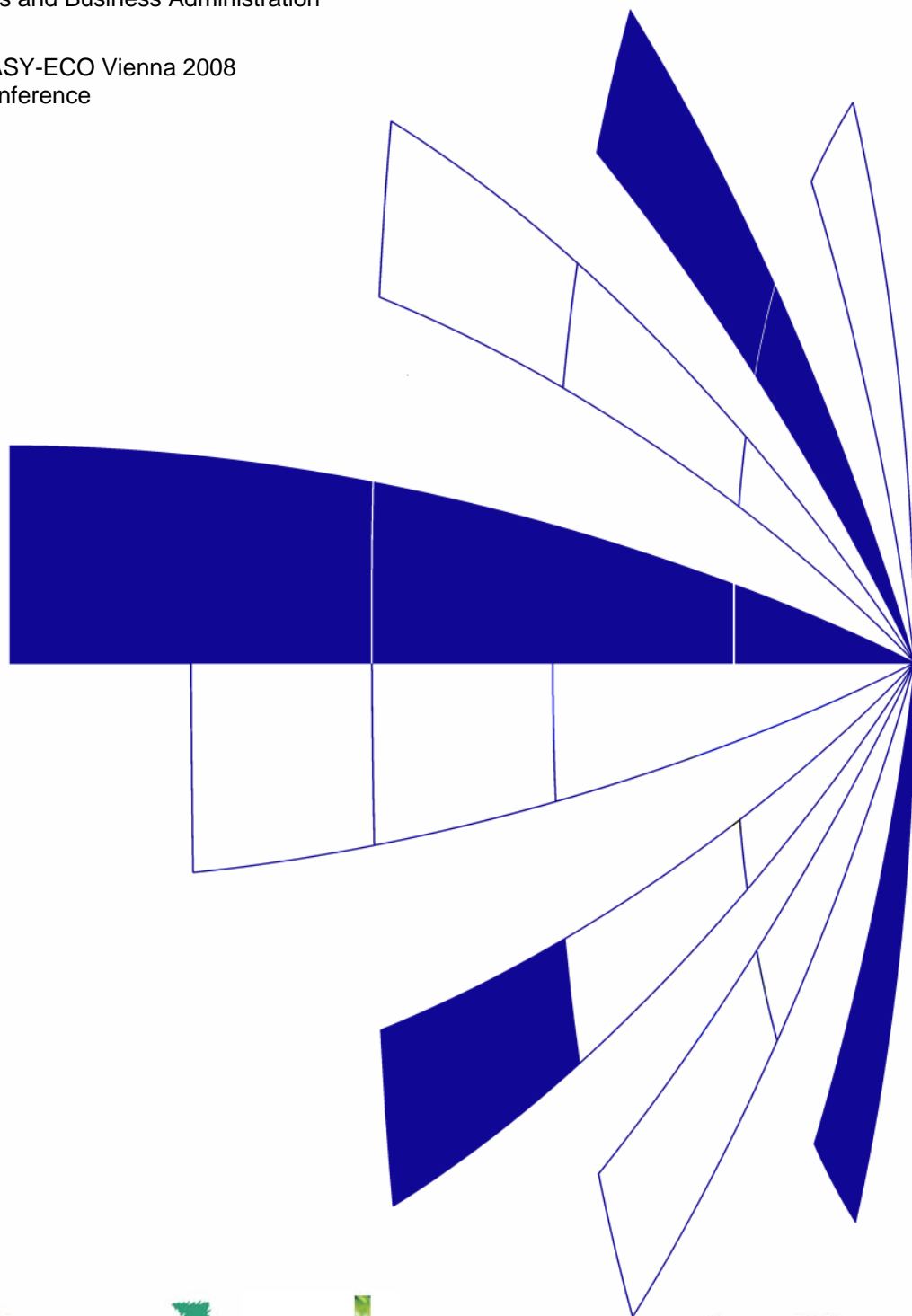


# GOVERNANCE BY EVALUATION INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES AND LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## Foreword

**André Martinuzzi**

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## **Governance by Evaluation: Institutional Capacities and Learning for Sustainable Development**

In the last 20 years sustainable development has evolved from a vague vision into a set of basic principles, guiding decisions and actions on various levels. As a consequence decision makers in the public and the private sector are calling for reliable information about whether or not policies, programmes and projects support sustainable development. The only solid way of generating this information is through professional evaluation, based on scientifically tested concepts and methods.

In recent years a number of innovative methods and new areas of work have emerged, such as strategic environmental assessments, impact assessments, peer reviews, systems evaluations, theory-based evaluations and participatory approaches. These new developments confront both contractors and evaluators with new methodological and practical challenges. Coping with these challenges requires institutional capacity building and learning on both an individual and an organizational level. These are the issues which are the focus of the EASY-ECO Vienna Conference 2008. It will present a broad variety of research findings, evaluation concepts and case studies on institutional aspects, policy learning and methodological innovations in evaluating sustainable development.

Since 2002 we have been coordinating the EU-project "EASY-ECO - Evaluation of Sustainability" (funded within FP5 and FP6). It aims to train young researchers, increase market transparency, build capacities in the corresponding field and facilitate networking among scientists, evaluators and clients. So far, five major conferences and four training courses have taken place. The involvement of more than 300 outstanding academics, very good feedback from 200 trainees and a book series on evaluating sustainable development show the success of this series. Consequently, the German UNESCO commission acknowledged EASY-ECO as an official project of the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The United Nations Environment Programme, SkyEurope and Kommunalkredit Public Consulting support this series of events. Let me also thank our Austrian supporters, the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, and the City of Vienna.

In order to meet the growing interest and demand of young researchers, the EASY-ECO series will continue until 2010, offering six more training courses (Germany, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic and Estonia) and two Euro-Conferences scheduled for Budapest 2009 and for Brussels 2010. About 600 academics, practitioners and young researchers from all over Europe are expected to participate in this series of events.

It is a pleasure to welcome the EASY-ECO series in Vienna, where it was designed seven years ago and where it started in 2002. As the initiator and coordinator I am happy to welcome you to four days of outstanding presentations, interesting discussions and valuable possibilities for exchange and networking.

## **Keynote presentations**



**Bob Williams**

trainer and consultant on the use of systems concepts in evaluation  
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## **Learning Within the Unknowable: How Puzzling Our Way Through Can Help Evaluate Sustainable Development**

There are people in the systems field who argue that policy and systems thinking are poor bedfellows. Whilst this may seem counter-intuitive, they have a point.

Policy in systems terms is about setting boundaries. Boundaries are inevitable because policy is about beliefs, world views and ideology.

Without these we wouldn't need policy because everything would be possible. Boundaries are also necessary because resource are limited. If there were no resource limits then everything would be possible and we would not need policy. Ideology and resource constraints are a potent brew, they decide whose ideas win, and whose ideas are marginalised, they determine who or what is "in" and who or what is "out". In other words "policy" is fundamentally a political.

Politics and systems thinking are often at opposite ends of the spectrum for the simple reason that systems thinking exposes politics, and thus policy, for what it really is.

On the other hand there are ways around this Gordian Knot. This talk explores some approaches that enable evaluators to use systems ideas within the constraints set by policy makers and the political context.

**Michael Q. Patton**

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## **Utilization-Focused Evaluation Approaches and Learnings for Sustainable Development**

This presentation will examine the implications of *utilization-focused evaluation* for evaluating sustainable development. I have just completed the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the book, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, which will be published in May. Revising the book gave me the opportunity to review developments in evaluation over the last decade since the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition was published (1997). The field of evaluation has changed and developed enormously in the last 10 years, nowhere more so than in Europe. This presentation will present what I see as *the top ten new directions in evaluation over the last decade* and their implications for evaluating sustainable development.

The presentation will also address ways in which alternative theories of change directly affect how one evaluates sustainable development. Past EASY-ECO conferences have included substantial discussion about the need for operationalizing sustainability and agreeing on a standardized set of measures and evaluation methods. I shall argue that such a quest is misguided and will, instead, treat sustainability as a “sensitizing concept” rather than a concept in need of operationalization. I’ll outline the implications of evaluation use of these alternative approaches to conceptualizing sustainability.

Finally, I’ll use the *Panarchy*<sup>1</sup> ecological model to suggest how different evaluation approaches take precedence at different stages in a dynamic sustainability cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> Gunderson, Lance and C.S. Holling. 2002. *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*. London: Island Press.

Westley, Frances, Brenda Zimmerman, and Michael Q. Patton. 2006. *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed*. Toronto: Random House.

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## **XXQ Factors for Sustainable Urban Development: A Systems Economics View**

*“Large cities have been and will continue to be an important source of economic growth” (Quigley, 1998, p. 137)*

Modern cities turn increasingly into functional areas seeking for a balance between agglomeration forces and urban quality of life. This paper will address the issue of sustainable urban development from a quality (performance) perspective. It aims to identify the critical access factors for the highest possible quality (XXQ) of the urban economy. A plea is made for a coherent methodological approach based on a systems economic view. In addition to a sketch of recent dynamic trends in urban systems in OECD countries, it pays attention to theories on urban growth and performance. Next, five critical success conditions for a high performance of cities will be presented in a coherent urban systems economics framework. The policy lessons of the analysis will form the last part of the paper.

**Reiner Grundmann**

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## **Science and Policy: What do we need to know in order to act? Lessons from Ozone Layer Protection and Climate Change**

I will examine the paradox that although the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has reached a broad consensus, various governments pursue different, if not opposing policies. In contrast, in another high profile case of global governance, the Montreal Protocol, there was political agreement without a comprehensive scientific consensus. The Montreal Protocol has become the paradigm case for a successful global environmental treaty. This puzzle not only challenges the traditional belief that scientific knowledge is objective and can be more or less directly translated into political action, but also calls for a better understanding of the relation between science and public policy in modern society. Based on the conceptual framework of knowledge politics the use of expert knowledge in public discourse and in political decisions will be analysed. In order to do so, one needs to assess and revisit various claims made about the two cases. For example, it has been argued that the differences between both cases can be explained by the greater size of the climate change issue compared to the ozone layer case, or by the absence of a dramatic event like the ozone hole, or by the greater scientific uncertainty in the climate case. I will show that these claims need to be critically examined and that we need an alternative explanation.

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## **Knowledge-based Governance for SD: A Typology of Appraisals around the Policy Cycle**

As the European Commission often puts it, we live in an age of a knowledge-based economy and society. In the Lisbon Strategy, for example, the EU “set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become *the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*”.<sup>1</sup> If we extend this often-used phrase, we can say that a knowledge-based economy and society also implies knowledge-based governance for sustainable development (SD), i.e. public decision-making processes that build on evidence produced by different types of appraisals, rather than on ideological standpoints. This presentation gives an exploratory overview of the interplay between the steps of public governance and appraisal exercises. It aims to sketch the “forest of appraisals”, which may easily get out of sight because it consists of many different trees.

After highlighting key political roles appraisals can play (legitimise policies, moderate conflicts and facilitate learning), the presentation shows that the governance of SD can be framed as a cyclical process that follows several steps (more or less resembling the classical policy cycle). The steps of the “governance cycle” identified in the presentation are (i) political commitment and guidance, (ii) specify policy goals, (iii) design policies, (iv) implement policies and (v) renew political commitment and guidance.

In a next step, the presentation explores in a selective way that most types of appraisal are tailored in a way they do not address the entire governance cycle equally; they rather target some of its steps. Two conclusions are derived from this observation: First, different forms of appraisals have different sorts of impact along the cycle of public governance. While studies may have a strong influence on political agenda setting, monitoring with SD Indicators may be most relevant for specifying policy goals, and impact assessments may target in particular the design of policies, etc. Second, the presentation also highlights that the nature of different appraisals is also shaped by their place in the governance cycle. In other words, knowledge-based governance is not a one-way-street of influence from appraisal to governance, but also about how governance shapes appraisals.

Finally, the presentation explores how strong the reciprocity between policy-makers and public administrators on the one hand and the appraisal community on the other hand is, and it concludes that overall the degree of self-reference should not be underestimated.

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<sup>1</sup> European Council (2000): Presidency Conclusions - Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000, DOC/00/8.

## **Parallel sessions**

### I a Evaluating SD strategies

**Michal Sedlacko**

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**Applying institutional theory to the assessment of national strategies for sustainable development**

As early as 1972 Principle 14 of the Stockholm Declaration establishes planning as being “an essential tool” in reaching conflicting objectives of development and protection and improvement of the environment. Two decades later Rio’s Agenda 21 furthered this notion by requiring elaboration of the so-called national sustainable development (SD) strategies. Today, a considerable number of countries adopted a national SD strategy, incurring, especially in the countries of the European Union, a need for their evaluation. The paper builds on the understanding of a national SD strategy as a “set of mechanisms” and utilises institutional theory to identify common denominators to these mechanisms. National SD strategy processes are translated into “action arenas”, the holons of human interactions regulated by rules, where institutional learning can be interpreted as institutional change. Applicability of Ostrom’s Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework for assessment of preparatory processes of a national SD strategy and mechanisms of horizontal and vertical policy integration and stakeholder participation is explored.

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**Shortcomings of the evaluation methods in the national strategies for sustainable development**

In this paper I am concentrating on the questions whether guide and evaluation methods can support the evaluation process of national strategies, how the quality of sustainable development evaluations can be secured at different stages in the policy cycle and what experiences have been made by using innovative sustainable development evaluation approaches. The international literature includes numerous studies by international research scientists and institutions concerning national strategies for sustainable development. I reviewed and analysed 18 evaluation methods in order to highlight their similarities and reveal their shortcomings. Analysing and evaluating the national strategies are highly important when judging their efficiency as the approach, the structure and the content of a strategy influence its future role. After analysing these evaluation methods and guides I concluded that the evaluation methods and guides do not pay enough attention to the content of the strategies, while the issues of elaboration, implementation, integration and evaluation are emphasized.



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## **Types and functions of monitoring and evaluation approaches in three Austrian strategies for Sustainable Development**

This paper explores the monitoring and evaluation approaches used in three Austrian national-level sustainability strategy processes in a broader sense: the Austrian Biodiversity Strategy, the Austrian Forest Dialogue, and the Austrian Strategy for Sustainable Development. The analysis focuses on the types of monitoring and evaluation instruments and procedures used as well as on the political functions that monitoring and evaluation fulfil in those strategy processes.

Our analyses build on two different strands of theory, one more instrumental, the other one more critical. From the first perspective, monitoring and evaluation are regarded as instruments for rational, effective and efficient strategy formulation and implementation. Here, monitoring the progress toward a strategy, learning from evaluation results, and adapting accordingly, constitute the necessary feedback loop that closes the cycle of strategic management of sustainability strategies. Thereby, monitoring and evaluation may take place in two different forms, i.e. tracking the process of strategy formulation and implementation (process monitoring) or evaluating the actual outcome of the measures taken (outcome monitoring). Guidelines for sustainable development strategies, e.g. as published by international organisations, typically reflect the spirit of the rationalist-instrumental perspective and accordingly call for “integrated mechanisms for assessment, follow up, evaluation and feedback” (International Forum on National Sustainable Development Strategies 2001). Consequently, results of monitoring and evaluation exercises are meant to provide the basis for learning from failure, to improve the process of political decision-making, and to pave the way for better policies and enhanced outcomes in the future.

From a second theory perspective, in contrast, monitoring and evaluation are not only seen as stimuli for policy change but are also perceived as symbols of acceptability, indicating transparency and administrative willingness to learn and, thus, being central to the legitimation of state and non-state actors. In this sense, evaluations may rather be done to vindicate individual and organisational behaviour than to support efficient and rational decision making. At the extreme, instead of facilitating reflexivity and learning, evaluation and monitoring procedures may be instrumentalised as a form of elaborate organisational self-presentation, self-legitimation and public relations activity.

The three Austrian strategy processes analysed in this paper show very different instrumental approaches to monitoring and evaluation (both of process and outcome), and monitoring and evaluation also fulfilled diverse strategic and political functions for the key political actors involved. In the case of the Austrian Sustainability Strategy the process was monitored and its outcomes were externally evaluated. In contrast, in the case of the Austrian Biodiversity Strategy a semi-external evaluation approach was applied. In the Forest Dialogue some internal process reviews were conducted, outcome evaluation is foreseen for the future.

Our analyses provide evidence which supports both theoretical perspectives introduced above: the intentions for and the actual functions of the monitoring and evaluation procedures employed vary significantly both between but also within the three strategy processes. Our comparisons show that the observed “functions” of monitoring and evaluation, inter alia, depend on the institutional capacities of the key actors involved, on the institutional embedding of the processes as well as on the political weight and profile of the underlying policy problems addressed.

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## **Objectives and Indicators of Sustainable Development in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of European Coherence**

Setting objectives and measuring progress in achieving them with indicators are two closely related features that are typical for serious strategic management approaches in general, and for virtually all sustainable development (SD) strategies in the EU-27 in particular. This paper summarizes some key findings of a study that was commissioned by Eurostat and conducted by the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS) together with the Department of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU) in early 2007. One purpose of the study was to compare objectives and indicators of SD across Europe. The points of reference used for the European comparison were (i) the objectives of the renewed EU SDS from 2006, and (ii) the indicators of the EU Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI) framework from 2005. By using these two points of reference, both the study and this report provide a comprehensive picture of how coherent objectives and indicators of SD are across Europe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is mainly based on the ESDN Quarterly Report December 2007 "Objectives and Indicators of Sustainable Development in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of European Coherence" (see [http://www.sd-network.eu/?k=quarterly%20reports&report\\_id=7](http://www.sd-network.eu/?k=quarterly%20reports&report_id=7)). We thank Pascal Wolff from Eurostat for the opportunity to disseminate the findings of the study, and Ewald Rametsteiner from BOKU University for conducting the study together with RIMAS.

## **Parallel sessions**

### I b Learning through SD evaluations

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**Sally Nicholson****Iola Leal Riesco****From an audit report to a learning process? The challenge to integrate the environment into the European Community's development assistance**

For many years, the EC has made a significant contribution to Official Development Assistance (ODA) worldwide. This brings with it the considerable responsibility of integrating the issues of environment and sustainable development into the EC's development cooperation, both as a cross-cutting and as a sector issue. Efforts of this kind are needed because many international development objectives such as poverty alleviation, reduced child mortality and improved maternal health are very often closely linked to a healthy environment. Moreover, ensuring environmental sustainability is enshrined in the EU treaty. And the need to strengthen the integration of environment has also been stressed in the European Consensus on Development 2005. However, the 2006 report of the European Court of Auditors highlighted existing problems and shortcomings in the Commission's work. The present paper analyses this report and asks what impacts it has had so far on political strategies, especially regarding the ongoing revision of the 2001 Environment Integration Strategy. The analysis concludes that the audit report was merely one element within a broader process driven by actors from within the Commission, the EU Member States and from civil society. However, recent developments with regard to the revision of the integration strategy do not indicate that any great success has been achieved. Furthermore, the principles of country ownership and policy coherence remain complex but crucial challenges.

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## **WFD, Institutional Infrastructure, decision-making and stakeholders' participation in water risk management in Poland and Romania**

Water related quality and quantity issues are extremely complex, interdependent and marked by uncertainties and risks. Therefore in order to achieve sustainability in such a dynamic and sensitive context there is a strong need to design and develop evaluation tools and approaches that can contribute to knowledge-based governance of water resources. On the other hand, when talking about acceptable levels of risk, experts (decision-makers and scientists) are seen equally equipped to decide as any other group of citizens that are undergoing the consequences of different management actions (Kallis, Videira, Antunes & Santos, 2004).

Our comparative Polish-Romanian study is based on the principle of "a participatory approach involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels" as in the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development, and the public participation as required in article 11 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) (Directive 2000/60/EC). The paper also explores the management dimension regarding water pollution risk.

Managing water bodies as referred to in the WFD requires a new, integrated approach to protection, improvement and sustainable use of Europe's water resources. Nevertheless, this systematic approach creates several implementation problems especially because it requires a comprehensive, transparent and adaptive framework for decision-making where all stakeholders have a voice and power to influence the basin management plans (Cortner, Wallace, Burke & Moote, 1998). As shown in the EEB Handbook on EU Water Policy under the Water Framework Directive (Lanz & Schoeuer, 2001) the sustainable water management faces a significant threat due to the incomplete implementation of the directives regulating European water resources. Therefore a key issue in the implementation of the WFD, which is considered to be a state-of-the-art piece of sustainable development legislation dealing with water in all European countries, is to evaluate whether and how the stakeholders are taken into account for the elaboration of the management plans, and if there is a certain administrative culture that influences both positively and negatively the participation process in order to provide the necessary knowledge for the policy learning cycle that will result in improving the decision-making related to water resources (Raadgever & Mostert 2005).

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## **Sustainability and Learning at the Local Level of Governance: A Network Approach in Assessment**

Although some scepticism surrounds the application of systems-related analytical frameworks for describing and understanding social phenomena, there is growing interest in finding ways to go beyond the thought-provoking metaphors these models offer for social scientists and put these models into practice through empirical studies. Complex adaptive systems (CAS) concepts may be used to think about the transformation (or the lack thereof) of governance for environmental sustainability at the city level. In my research program, I make an attempt at operationalizing CAS categories in assessing the development of local environmental sustainability policies as a result of the interaction of policy actors and policy issues exchanging information, generating knowledge and developing new routines and practices in governance.

As opposed to traditional policy analysis approaches, I particularly focus on learning effects in a network perspective and their impact on the outcome of the policy process.

In my paper I present a possible incarnation of a CAS-oriented assessment framework and also provide case studies of a Hungarian cities, where I conducted fieldwork collecting both qualitative data and quantitative data used for network analysis.

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## **Use of the SEA for 2007-2013 structural funds (ERDF) programmes in France: appropriation by actors and experience feedback**

In 2006, French administration had to comply for the first time with the use of Strategic Environmental Assessment as designed by the 2001/42/EC directive. The implementation of SEA tool has been considered by all French regions in the framework of ex ante evaluations of 2007-2013 structural funds programmes. From this experience, as the author has been in charge of the achievement of several SEA in different regions, this paper will investigate the tension between this highly technical exercise and the need for appropriation of this approach and its results by stakeholders, through the following points:

- Differences in the methodology of environmental impact assessment
- Implication of stakeholders in the process
- Organisation of the consultation of the public, which seemed to be a weak point of these evaluations

The paper will conclude on the potential improvements which look necessary for a better appropriation of the SEA approach.

### Key differences in methodology

- Choice of environmental themes: holistic approach versus selected environmental stakes
- Selection of criteria of analysis: respect of the EU approach (nature of impacts, scale of impacts, uncertainty, irreversibility, ...) versus restricted set of criteria for simplification of the exercise
- Definition of eco-conditionality criteria and alternative measures: systematic production for each negative or contrasted impacts versus pragmatic choices
- Monitoring system: focus on output indicators linked to criteria of conditionality versus enlargement to outcome and impact indicators

### Implication of stakeholders

- Steering committee: involvement of all partners versus selection of key actors ; high level group versus involvement of technical staff
- Production of analysis: work carried out by experts versus shared analysis with stakeholders

### Organisation of the consultation of the public

- Documents for consultation (report, synthesis and advice from the environmental authority) were not adapted to public skills and knowledge
- No specific communication for this target
- As a result, feedbacks from the consultation were very limited

### Main conclusions

- For this first generation of SEA for public policy programmes in France, these exercises were very technical and very difficult to understand for non specialised people
- A culture is getting shared among technicians, which is a first step, considering the low awareness raising for environmental issues in public administration
- During the forthcoming implementation of these structural funds programmes, beneficiaries will have to take into account new rules with environmental conditionality: this will be the first time to observe how SEA impacted the selection of EU ERDF funded projects.

## **Parallel sessions**

I c Methodological innovations for SD evaluations



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**Monitoring and evaluation as elements of strategic governance for cohesion policy**

The paper outlines two approaches, which have recently been developed in Austria to support the strategic governance of Structural Fund Programmes and which make explicit and creative use of monitoring & evaluation:

- **Process Monitoring of Impacts:** This monitoring approach observes processes that are expected to lead to results or impacts – and not just indicators as their final measure. Thus early information can be provided for programme actors (mainly via project reports) on the likeliness of achieving results / impacts, with a particular emphasis on those domains which can be influenced by them or for which they are responsible.
- **Strategic Governance process for National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) and OPs,** which consists of the monitoring of projects supported by the OPs, an interactive exchange of information, evaluations aimed at fostering joint learning through a combination of internal and external assessments as well as institutional learning capable to improve the performance of individual actors and the programme as a whole.

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## **Reflection for targeted action: The use of transition monitoring in innovation programs**

Rather than from a state of knowing innovation programs and projects aiming for transitions to sustainability start from a state of not-knowing. Therefore innovation programs require continuous evaluation and monitoring to sharply observe their program, projects and surroundings and purposefully navigate their programs. To this cause, transition monitoring is developed and applied in a wide range of innovation programs. To improve the on-going development of a generic transition monitoring framework, a comparative case study was conducted in five Dutch innovation programs that started with transition monitoring from early 2007. These programs contribute to 10 to 150 projects and pursue transitions in fields ranging from water management to geo-information. The monitoring resulted in two main outcomes: a generic, increasingly refined and robust monitoring approach and the influence of monitoring on each program eg, whether transition monitoring resulted in clear, implemented and effective steering suggestions and an improved program strategy. With a meta-evaluation or comparative case study, the relation between features of the monitoring process, context and results is explored, to describe what mechanisms (features of the monitoring approach) and contexts (perspective and steering philosophy of the involved programme manager and described transition) lead to these outcomes. This paper shows the features and preliminary results from an innovative monitoring approach which is potentially of interest to all innovative policy programs that pursue transitions in an increasingly complex world with a network-based and learning oriented management approach. It highlights issues like the importance of the dynamic societal context, the organizational set-up and individual preferences that shape and determine the results and effects of evaluation.

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## **Policy learning by ex-ante evaluation of infrastructure strategies: “Regional Infrastructure Foresight” as participatory strategy learning process<sup>1</sup>**

Infrastructure planning is a process full of complexity and uncertainties. Large technical system and its influence factors make it complex, long life time of technical elements imply high uncertainties. In practice, provided assumptions are often used to reduce complexity and supersede uncertainties. However, sustainable infrastructure has to be adaptable to changing uncertain framework conditions. The locally and regionally organized Swiss sanitation sector is in particular a relevant example.

To establish an infrastructure planning which delivers more robust solutions against possible but today uncertain influences, we propose a program evaluation and strategy planning process. It includes foresight methods to identify and map uncertainties which are followed by a participatory assessment of potential solutions. The process delivers on the one hand the suggestion to choose a strategy as product of the process, on the other hand a comprehensive multiple learning processes of the participants in the evaluation which have to implement the suggestion in the succeeding process.

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<sup>1</sup> First draft – do not cite without permission

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## **Evaluating policy coherence for development in Austria: Towards building a measurement tool**

Policies other than development cooperation have a strong impact on developing countries. The European Union (EU) concept of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) aims to build synergies between those policies and development objectives to increase the effectiveness of development aid (EC 2007). Failing to implement the EC's ambitious PCD agenda will mean failing to reach the Millennium Development Goals (EC 2005). Yet, there is no tool available to measure PCD in the member states. This paper reviews the debate on PCD and aims to lay the methodological foundations for building an innovative evaluation tool to measure PCD in Austria in order to inform knowledge-based governance for sustainable development.

The EU aims to maximise the positive effect of non-aid EU policies while minimising their negative impact on developing countries progress towards the MDGs. The European Consensus devotes considerable attention to PCD and takes a series of strong commitments (European Consensus). Achieving greater policy coherence demands sustained efforts to improve the integration of sectoral policies, to ensure policy integration across levels of government, and to ensure consistency in the choices made by the various stakeholders (OECD 2002).

Two strategies are usually pursued: On the one hand, NGOs and other stakeholders demand accountability and transparency by publishing case studies of incoherence when e.g. trade and development policies are in conflict (CONCORD/EVM 2007). On the other hand, policy integration for development (DPI) needs to build institutional capacity in order to create coordination mechanisms across government departments. This approach relies to a large extent on best practices and making lessons learned transferable (Ashoff 2005, Obrovsky 2007). Even in countries following a 'whole government approach' to PCD (Picciotto 2004, OECD DAC 2006) such as Sweden, assessment of actual coherence is limited to an annual report to parliament.

In its recently released PCD report the EC states that "the analysis of the degree of PCD remains both analytical and empirical" and that establishing a measurement system of a country's coherence is proving difficult. "None of the existing ones have achieved a degree of maturity that provides a sufficient level of reliability and credibility (EC 2007)."

Reviewing initiatives such as the 'Commitment to Development Index' (CGD 2006) and the recent assessment of the EU's Impact Assessment System (ECDPM 2005, 2007, CEPS 2006), the paper points out further avenues for research towards an innovative tool evaluating PCD particularly suited to the Austrian context. Taking clues from the literature on Environmental Policy Integration (Lafferty & Hovden 2002, Hertin & Berkhout 2003, Nilsson & Persson 2003) the tool seeks to assess three dimensions of PCD in combination: institutional capacity of PCD, coherence of policy impact and political will to implement PCD.

## **Parallel sessions**

I d Case studies I

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## **Assessing intersectoral partnership in the evaluation of common initiative EQUAL in Poland**

Increasingly, agencies representing government, business, and civil society are working together in partnership. The impact of intersectoral partnerships for social innovation as well as for the sustainability of the projects may hardly be underestimated. At the same time, working in partnership is a complex, difficult and time-consuming activity. Therefore, it is essential to prove that resources invested into partnership are being used effectively. Unfortunately, there is huge discrepancy between the “career” of this mode of governance and attempts to measure its efficiency. Developing assessment tools for intersectoral partnerships and using them in evaluation processes seems to be a solution for this problem.

This paper aims to identify the extent to which Polish evaluation of Common Initiative EQUAL, EU funded program, based on the work of intersectoral partnerships, provides comprehensive assessment of this mechanism. Firstly, two assessment frameworks for assessing intersectoral partnerships will be presented and their usefulness for evaluating EQUAL will be discussed. Secondly, two identified “key” indicators, namely mutuality and organizational identity, will be applied to explore the quality of intersectoral partnership assessment in EQUAL evaluation.

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## **“MEERA” - A Web-Based Resource for Improving Evaluations of Education for Sustainable Development Programs**

My Environmental Education Resources Assistant – or – “MEERA” is a web site designed to support evaluations of education for sustainable development (EfSD) programs. MEERA was developed in part based on formative evaluations involving over 50 educators of EfSD programs. MEERA’s content includes information highlighting evaluation and its importance, step-by-step guidance for completing an EfSD program evaluation, suggestions on related evaluation topics, searchable summaries and in-depth profiles of sample EfSD program evaluations, and reviews of additional evaluation resources. These features build on existing resources, summarize key points through a question and answer format, provide unique examples and insights, and offer direct access to additional sources of information suitable for those with “beginner,” “intermediate,” or “advanced” evaluation experience. Results from MEERA’s formative evaluations have been positive and although MEERA has not been officially launched, the site has already had visitors from 68 countries. Over the next year a summative evaluation of MEERA will be conducted to determine how well MEERA is able to help educators evaluate their EfSD programs and to what extent it may serve as a model for other evaluation contexts.

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## **Integrating social concerns into electricity planning**

This paper deals with the complexity of the social issues surrounding electricity planning. A methodology is presented establishing a possible way of allocating weights to the most important social impacts of the electricity generation options and extending these results to the evaluation of future electricity plans. The process combined Delphi method with the Analytic Hierarchy Process, for the pairwise comparison of the electricity generation technologies against the social criteria. A social impact score was then derived and assigned to each technology. In order to obtain a final ranking of future feasible plans, these overall social scores of the electricity generation alternatives were aggregated using an additive function. The final output of the social analysis is an Average Social Index of each possible electricity generation mix.



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## **How to govern for sustainable tourism? An evaluation of the Dutch governance approach to sustainability**

This paper evaluates the incorporation of sustainable development principles of governance in the Dutch governance structure for domestic tourism. The paper evaluates the strategies, policy instruments, actor-structures and distribution of competences for tourism development, taking as reference the 2005 joint-report of UNEP-WTO “Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers” (2005). The main finding is that there has been a limited and only symbolic innovation of tourism governance based on sustainability principles. Further, the paper discusses the governance preferences for domestic tourism in the Netherlands, drawing on the responses to a questionnaire filled in by 44 actors across a wide range of stakeholders. The main conclusion is stakeholders’ governance preferences differ significantly. For certain actors, neo-liberal principles of governance are highly cherished and they differ from the “UNEP-WTO model”; but some still agree that voluntary policy coordination across scales and domains has added-value for sustainability. Other actors seem quite concerned with sustainability; but they do not really know if a “UNEP-WTO model” would indeed help the cause of promoting sustainable tourism development.

## **Parallel sessions**

II a Types and tools of SD evaluation,  
assessment and feedback I

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**“Sustainability Impact Assessment: Definitions, Approaches and Applications in Europe”<sup>1</sup>**

This paper focuses on sustainability impact assessments (SIAs) in Europe. Generally, impact assessments (IAs) must be seen as a tool that addresses important governance challenges, like informed (or knowledge-based) decision-making, policy integration, strategic management, transparency and stakeholder participation. The growing acceptance of sustainable development (SD) as overarching policy goal has recently stimulated much interest in methods and tools that assess the impacts of SD policies. The paper will first provide a definition and overview of different IA approaches. Second, it will describe the integrated IA system developed and applied by the European Commission. Finally, two case studies of Switzerland and Belgium will show how SIAs are applied to national policy-making.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper appeared in a slightly different form as ESDN Quarterly Report in June 2007.

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## **The challenge of incorporating strategic environmental assessment in the environmental assessment system of Belarus: Evaluation of a Pilot SEA**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic decision-aiding procedure for evaluating likely significant environmental impacts of strategic-level development options (Therivel et al. 1992, Sadler and Verheem 1996, Sadler 2001). The states of the former Soviet Union (fSU) are in the process of incorporating this procedure in their environmental assessment systems, which evolved from the so-called SER/OVOS system inherited from the Soviet Union and contain only very non-specific provisions for SEA (Cherp 2001). The Republic of Belarus, a transitional fSU country, is also in the process of reforming its planning and environmental assessment (EA) system in line with international requirements and thus in the process of incorporating the SEA tool for assessment of its strategic-level activities. To understand the functioning of the EA system within the context of a transitional country and to determine the possible ways of incorporating the SEA tool there, it is very important to evaluate the acquired experience in conducting the pilot SEA in Belarus. The paper presents an evaluative methodology for the pilot SEA and demonstrates the ways the evaluation methodology for SEA can be adjusted to the context of a country where it is applied. The results of this study intend to provide important information for other fSU<sup>1</sup> states, which possess similar EA systems and face similar challenges of aligning these systems with principles of good governance and sustainable development.

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<sup>1</sup> In this study category of fSU states excludes the Baltic states, EA systems of which have undergone drastic changes associated with the recent joining of these states the European Union.

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## **Governance by Evaluation? The use of Environmental Assessments in the development of Policies and Plans in Region of Southern Denmark**

1 January 2007 the Danish structural reform took effect. 13 counties and 273 municipalities were replaced by 5 new regions, 98 larger municipalities and 7 new state centres. New was also the division between public actors of a number of tasks related to the environment. The authority is now divided between the municipalities and the state centres. The regions are 'left' with a development task but no real authority. Business as usual for some, a totally new playing field for others!

In this paper the focus is on the regions' new development task. The case explored is that of Southern Denmark, a region consisting of 3½ of the old counties, encompassing 22 municipalities and the only region in Denmark with direct borders to another country, Germany. The regional challenges are vast. While the region's main task is to provide healthcare, regional development is also a responsibility of the region and a task which should not be neglected, not least because of the budget (partly EU funds, partly state funds) set aside to support the various strategies and plans that are to be drawn up by 31 December 2007. But the development task itself is also a difficult one, getting the urban and the rural, nature/environment and economic growth, and access and open spaces to fit together. In the first part of the paper, the division of labour, work, progress and outcomes of this task is explored and shortly discussed.

The second part of the paper then focuses on the use of environmental or sustainability assessments in the development and drawing up of the various plans and strategies. The paper reflects on the methodological changes that have occurred and on how the experiences are captured and incorporated into new assessments carried out as well as into the Sustainability Strategy of Region of Southern Denmark. A clear result of this is that assessments are not carried out after a plan has been developed and politically approved, but rather alongside and in the latter stages of the developments of plans and strategies. It is shown how sustainability assessments using this methodology can then contribute directly and pro-actively to strategies and plans rather than merely evaluate possible positive and negative impacts of these. The outcome is that any impacts are clearly identified in the development phase and thus before the plan or strategy is ratified and put into effect. Opportunities to lessen negative impacts and/or enlarge positive ones thus exist, and decisions to do either more or nothing therefore rests on solid and clearly identified base of knowledge.

Finally, through qualitative interviews, the experiences and learning effects of those tasked with developing the plans and strategies are explored. The paper concludes with suggestions for a cyclical development and assessment model.

## **Parallel sessions**

### II b Learning and capacity building

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**Göran Finnveden****Oskar Wallgren****Sara Tyskeng****Daniel Jonsson****Framework and tools for ex post SEA: learning from evaluation and environmental systems analysis**

While the last five years has seen a rapid development of tools and methodological frameworks for ex ante SEA the ex post stages, also called SEA follow up, have been far less researched. In particular, ex post SEA has so far not learned much from the much more mature literature on programme evaluation. Furthermore, planners and practitioners have lacked of toolbox for ex post SEA. This paper provides a framework for ex post SEA based on insights and tools of environmental systems analysis and programme evaluation. The purpose of the framework is to promote a more learning-oriented and integrated used of ex post SEA in strategic decision making such as regional development planning or national policy making. The framework distinguishes three stages of scoping, analysis and learning, and demonstrates the informational linkages to the strategic decision-making process. It presents a tool box including specific analytical tools as well as meta-tools such as the programme theory framework and the DPSIR model to organize and classify evaluation data. Cases in regional transport and development planning are used to illustrate the possible application of the framework in practical terms.

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## **Interorganisational learning between Evaluators and Commissioning Agents**

The presentation addresses the relationship between evaluators and commissioning agents from an organisational learning perspective. Evaluators and commissioning agents have different professional backgrounds, with evaluators coming from research or consultancy organisations, and commissioning agents from politics or bureaucracy. These institutional backgrounds resonate in differing working cultures, language styles, knowledge, and perceptions of political and evaluation processes. This makes communication and learning between these two groups difficult. If evaluation should serve as a learning medium, inter-organisational learning processes are necessary.

For understanding learning processes in and between organisations, concepts of organisational learning are useful. They distinguish between different learning modes (single-loop, double-loop), describe supportive factors, and describe different learning phases. By transferring these concepts to evaluation processes, supportive factors for learning processes in commissioning organisations may be identified.

One way to deal with communication difficulties between different organisations is to develop special boundary roles and to charge those organisation members with these roles that are capable of understanding, interpreting, and translating outside information. Boundary spanning roles can be described as linking an organisation and its environment through interaction between members and non-members. The interaction between evaluators and commissioning agents can thus be considered as an example of boundary spanning since this crosses the boundary between research and politics.

Concepts of organisational learning and boundary spanning are useful to describe factors supporting communication and learning between different organisations. They may thus offer insights in success factors of commissioner-evaluator interactions. Success factors can be identified for both actor groups. In planning and conducting an evaluation that aims at learning processes on the commissioner's side, evaluators may use this conceptual framework. Supporting factors for learning across organisational boundaries in evaluation processes are e.g. frequent face to face contact, mutual acceptance of different knowledge bases, openness to other organisational cultures, and a close link to the policy cycle. This supports the actual use of external knowledge in political decision-making.



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**Governance and the Promotion of a Culture of Evaluation:  
the Role of the Evaluation Networks<sup>1</sup>**

The concept of governance has gained great popularity across most of the social sciences during the last decade, signalling a shift to a broad concern with a wide range of mechanisms with no presumption that these are anchored primarily in the sovereign state. Governance is broader than government, and it pays attention to the multiple ways in which governmental and non-governmental organisations interact, and to the ways in which political power and authority are distributed, both internal and external to the state. This paper advances the discussion of local governance and the evaluation culture in the context of Latin America, where evaluation is many times –at best- considered a luxury, and other times a necessary evil. The constitution of networks of evaluators is a positive way to deal with these challenges and to consolidate experiences of good governance. An illustration of this possibility is shown by introducing the Latin American Evaluation Network –ReLAC- and its role in the promotion and strengthening of a better culture of evaluation in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> Very rough draft: please do not cite without the author's permission.

## **Parallel sessions**

II c Innovative approaches: Outcome Mapping (OM)

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**Development of a planning, learning and accountability system for sustainable agriculture chain development in eastern Indonesia Outcome Mapping in Action**

Planning, monitoring & evaluation (M&E) are important management processes of development programmes. Although M&E is often associated with accountability and reporting processes, there is a growing awareness that the M&E process can improve the planning and management systems and act as a vehicle for organisational learning. VECO Indonesia, the Indonesian country office of the Belgian NGO Vredeseilanden, aims to contribute to viable livelihoods for organized family farmers in Eastern Indonesia through partnerships with local organizations supporting the development of sustainable agriculture chains (SACD). For its new country programme 2008-2013 VECO Indonesia committed itself to develop a learning-oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in support of its programme and partners. It decided to use the Outcome Mapping (OM) approach to guide the design of the programme and the respective M&E system, referred to as the *Planning, Learning & Accountability* system (PLA). The paper highlights the different stages of Outcome Mapping and explains how it was 'customised' for VECO Indonesia's programme as well as the action research development of the PLA system in VECO Indonesia.

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## **Assessment of Outcome Mapping as a tool for evaluating and monitoring support to civil society organisations**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, government at state level is barely functional. Ideally, civil society organisations would help to fill the gap, but they are not well developed, as is often the case in transition societies. Thus, support to civil society is an important strategy for indirectly improving governance. But this support is as much about helping individuals, networks and relationships to develop as it is about reaching higher-level goals such as legislative change. Traditional evaluation tools such as LFA often prove too abstract and inflexible in this kind of context. Outcome Mapping provides a very promising alternative. In Outcome Mapping, the focus is on change at the level of the "boundary partners" with whom implementing organisations work directly.

This paper will present the results of an assessment of Outcome Mapping as a tool for evaluating and monitoring support to civil society organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study is based on a pilot application of OM, commissioned by Sida, with involved six civil society organisations which were funded through three Swedish intermediaries.

The assessment throws some new light on the following questions.

- How and when is it best to conduct OM?
- What is OM good for?
- Is OM useful for assessing sustainability and is OM a sustainable tool?
- In what kind of cases does OM not make sense?
- How do OM methods validate against more traditional questionnaire-based and interview assessment?
- How much can or should capacity to conduct OM be transferred to grass-roots organisations in the sense of subsidiarity?
- Who "owns" the evaluation process and how much: commissioning agent, consultant or implementing organisation?

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## **Fullfilling the expectations? The experiences with the M&E-part of Outcome Mapping in an education for sustainability project in Zimbabwe**

This research has analysed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities based on the Outcome Mapping (OM) methodology within the St2eep project, an education for sustainability project in Zimbabwe. The vast majority of development programmes in the public sector are being guided by conventional M&E-approaches based on the logframe. Although research is indicating significant problems with the implementation of these approaches, there are only few documented examples of experiences with alternative M&E frameworks. The case of St2eep allowed us to compare three years of experiences with M&E based on the logframe, with two years of M&E based on OM.

We evaluate how the project team and VVOB have perceived the performance of OM with regards to the two main aims of M&E activities: accountability and learning. This is complemented with an analysis of monitoring documentation. The project team refers to the collaborative nature of M&E in St2eep, the principles of self-assessment and peer-assessment, combined with public recognition for project successes, as the key factors supporting learning and accountability through M&E in St2eep. Double-loop learning would require improved data collection and more skills to monitor behaviour changes in the project to push critical reflection at a higher level.

## **Parallel sessions**

### II d Case studies II

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## **Participatory evaluation of sustainability on the local level: Lessons from the Viennese case**

Local Agenda 21 (LA21) aims at fostering sustainable development at a local level. In 1998, the city of Vienna started off with a pilot-process in one district (out of 23). In 2002 a citywide association named “LA 21 in Vienna for the encouragement of citizens’ participation” was established to coordinate the LA21 of Vienna. Presently, after almost 10 years of experience, nine districts are conducting an LA21-process. As the name of the citywide association already indicates, the central focus of the Viennese LA21 lies on the development of a specific kind of participatory democracy on the district level. The LA21-processes are organised as open discussion forums nearly without thematic limitations. Citizens are actually encouraged to develop ideas and projects by themselves.

An accompanying evaluation of the ongoing LA21 activities started in 2004 and was finished in September 2007. The evaluation approach had two main functions: (1) to provide practical knowledge for supporting the learning processes of all involved stakeholders and through that help to develop the process design; and (2) to assess the substantial outcome of the LA21-processes in the districts. To meet those aims a participatory approach was chosen. The participatory evaluation was organised as an interactive and social process, which allowed involved stakeholders to deeply reflect and integrate findings.

In this paper, we give insights into the experiences with the participatory approach in Vienna. We will further report on empirical results; the most important evaluation outcomes as well as procedural findings. We refer to the LA21 in Vienna as a “multi-optional-mode” based on its combination of two different theoretical concepts: the one of participatory democracy and the conventional one of Local Agenda 21. Our results show that the LA21 in Vienna oscillates between these two concepts. Combining these two objectives is a rather high aim, which requires intellectual as well as material resources and strong political commitment on different levels.

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**Process Criteria as Indicators of Success in the Field of Local-Agenda-21-Evaluations**

When measuring the success of LA21 processes in municipalities, two dimensions of quality have to be considered: process quality and result quality. The investigation that will be presented in this paper is focussing on the quality of LA21 processes and the significant parameters and key success factors. Therefore the main intention of the investigation has been the detection of these crucial success factors under the assumption of differences concerning their relevance.

The data collected in course of the investigations in Upper Austria and Styria was used to categorise the LA21 municipalities into 'Best-Practice-Municipalities' and 'normal' ones. Using this classification, it became possible to detect the above mentioned key success factors. These key factors are divided into factors regarding process support (e.g. support by politics, administration or the municipal parliament and political climate and basic financing) on the one hand, and factors concerning the professional design of the process (e.g. orientation on LA21 future plan, formulation of concrete activity objectives, support by the external coach and the exchange of experience and cooperation with other municipalities) on the other hand. The significance of formal aspects (i.e. constitution of behavioural rules, recurring examination of success) is beyond controversy in research and literature, but is neglected completely in the on-going LA21 processes, as the investigation shows.



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## Evaluation of Management Response Systems in Aid Organisations

This study evaluates formal response systems for evaluations in three aid organisations: Sida (Sweden), EuropeAid (European Commission) and IFAD (The International Fund for Agricultural Development). These so called management response systems have been developed by the organisations to ascertain that findings, conclusions and recommendations from evaluations are given due consideration and are acted upon. As results-based-management and a more distinct focus on evidence of aid effectiveness have gained prominence in aid organisations, the role of evaluation in the decision-making process has been highlighted. Although organised differently, all three systems aim at institutionalising feedback from evaluations.

The underlying question of the study is the present and potential role of the response systems to further the objectives of the organisations. More specifically the evaluation describes, analyses, and compares the management response systems in terms of intended outcomes, performance and implications for e.g. policy improvement, accountability and legitimatisation. The evaluation seeks to answer four key questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of the four response systems?
2. How do the systems work in practice?
3. What are the effects of the response system for the organisation and its partners?
4. How can and should an optimal response system be designed to contribute to its stated objectives?

The three case studies are carried out as programme theory evaluations with elements of stakeholder evaluation. Evaluation use within the organisations and of the various stakeholders is assessed through theories of evaluation use.

The analysis of each case study is carried out step-wise. First, the official intervention logic of the system is constructed. Secondly, the internal consistency of the intervention logic is probed through a logical analysis of the assumptions. Then the intervention logic as a whole together with the perceptions of stakeholders' are assessed against theories of evaluation use.

The third step comprises an analysis of how the system works in practice. An assessment is made of the implementation of the system, its effectiveness and relevance in relation to intended goals and to the intervention logic. A fourth step discusses the system in terms of the key questions of the evaluation and draws general conclusion from the comparative assessment.

The experiences of actors participating in the evaluation and management response processes are analysed with case study methodology, i.e. interviews and documents are used together with analytical categories as data analysis methods. Text or document analysis of evaluation reports and corresponding management response documents is also used. The applied measures are exclusively developed for an assessment of the quality of evaluation reports commissioned by the four organisations and of evaluating management response systems as a whole.

In 2005, the first of the three case studies, of Sida's system, was carried out. The remaining three evaluations are currently undertaken and will be finalised at the end of 2007. A comparison of the four systems will be made in the synthesis report due by April 2008. The synthesis report will draw general conclusions about management response systems as well as lessons learnt and best practice.

## **Parallel sessions**

III a Types and tools of SD evaluation,  
assessment and feedback II

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## **Assessing the future - How technological impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment deal with the long term**

The call for sustainable development implicates inter alia the challenge of a longer-term orientation of policy making and public planning processes. An increasing number of public and private institutions nowadays deals with complex and long-term questions, the anticipation of ecological and social changes, the steering of technological developments, the mitigation of harmful effects for future generations, or the development of adaptation strategies to changes.

This paper builds on a current PhD-project dealing with new institutional designs to impose a longer-term perspective in the policy-making process. These institutions might encompass such different organizations as a council for sustainable development, future commissions, or environmental officers or instruments such as environmental and technological impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation systems, etc. The main question is how these institutions are dealing with the near and farer future and how they influence public and political discourses on long-term challenges.

In this paper the focus is on the institutional design and use of two such instruments, namely technological impact assessment (TA) and strategic environmental planning (SEA). Both instruments include aspects of ex ante evaluations of the (future) effects of current developments, planning processes and/or decisions and thereby aim at developing reliable knowledge about the future. Consequently, by applying these instruments particular pictures of the future are produced. The paper deals with the question how these instruments contribute to a collective picture of the future and how they succeed to introduce longer time horizons into political and planning processes.

The comparison of the two instruments starts with an analysis of their general design principles and their institutional integration in Austrian political system and public planning processes. In addition, different techniques and methodologies applied by these instruments will be analysed with a special focus on how they address issues or effects along different time horizons. For example, technological impact assessment might base on expert knowledge or might be more oriented towards participatory approaches involving the broader public. It is argued that by relying on specific techniques, procedures or methodologies these instruments contribute to specific narratives about the future while ignoring others. Further, communication channels and the general influence on public and political discourses on long-term developments will be assessed. After the discussion of the general design principles and functioning of technological impact assessment and strategic environmental planning the paper will turn towards the analysis of two specific cases of TA and SEA from the Austrian context. For the analysis projects are chosen that demand a particular long time horizon, i.e. a time horizon exceeding one generation. The paper asks how this challenge is addressed in these particular cases, what problems occur with longer time horizons and what solutions are developed. It further asks how the future-oriented techniques of TA and SEA might have influenced the public, policy and/or planning discourses and decisions.

The paper concludes with the discussion of different design options by comparing the Austrian cases to other international experiences.

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## **Territorial impact assessment: A policy development tool for territorial cohesion**

Territorial impact assessment (TIA) is one of the newest strategic assessment and evaluation tools. Although it can be related to Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies, the most explicit references for TIA are European Spatial Development Perspectives (1999) and Third cohesion report. The results of the first project phase have brought a computer-supported tool for evaluation of sector policy effects on territorial cohesion. Additionally, the tool enables an integrated evaluation of measures from different sector policies and identification of their antagonistic or synergetic impacts. This allows for improvement of their coherence.

The ongoing project further develops the TIA tool, with specific aim to enable the specified assessment for different spatial units and several levels and aspects of synthesis. The approach is conceptualized as a three dimensional matrix: (1) policy measures, (2) territorial cohesion elements (objectives) and (3) spatial units. The impacts are evaluated on each intersection which enables a comprehensive evaluation. Since the project finishes in April 2008, only intermediate results are presented. Some questions, for example a transparent and valid aggregation method still need to be discussed further on.

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## **Assessing the sustainability impacts of European policies – stakeholder-based research methods and results**

This paper reports on the design and implementation of stakeholder-based research in European case study regions conducted within the Integrated Project, SENSOR (Sustainability Impact Assessment: Tools for Environmental Social and Economic Effects of Multifunctional Land Use in European Regions). SENSOR sets out to deliver Sustainability Impact Assessment Tools (SIATs) that will be used to forecast the impacts of European policies affecting 6 land use sectors (Forestry, Agriculture, Tourism, Energy, Nature Conservation and Transport).

Stakeholder-based research in case study regions performs two primary functions within the SENSOR project. Firstly, stakeholder-based analyses of policy scenarios are used to validate the outputs of model-based assessments. This research is supported by a detailed examination of sustainability issues in each case study region, informing the selection of relevant policy cases, sustainability criteria and indicators. Secondly, in combination with the assessment of policy impacts and supported by the analysis of key sustainability issues, stakeholder preferences for different policy scenarios are elicited through the examination of sustainability criteria. By outlining the rationale, design, execution and results of this programme of research, this paper sets out to provide an example of the key role that can be played by stakeholder-based research with the decision-support context of impact assessment, both in terms of its ability to provide policy makers with invaluable information in the form of stakeholder-driven assessments of policy impacts, and through the provision of insights into stakeholder preferences for different policy scenarios and land use futures.

## **Parallel sessions**

### III b The political relevance of SD evaluations I

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**Evaluations of sustainable development (SD) projects and their impact on environmental decision-making in Belarus within the period of 1991-2006**

Evaluations of SD projects are a relatively new feedback tool in the East-European countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Their impact on political decisions has been quite different from the commonly accepted practices in the western world. In many cases SD evaluations are encouraged, supported or run in cooperation with the national governments but, upon completion, they are for different reasons not considered as helpful information providers and, as a consequence, are not utilized for the purposes and in the process of sustainable governance. There are a number of factors which limit success of these initiatives and affect their insignificant final impact on environmental and political decisions.

This paper aims to analyse evaluations of SD projects in Belarus within the period of its independence (1991-2006). The impact of the evaluations on environmental decision-making process is studied in depth. The attempt is made to identify the determinant factors for the outcome of the evaluations to be effectively utilized in environmental governance. The discussion is raised regarding the existent political culture in modern Belarus and its interrelationships with the evaluations of SD projects.

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## Evaluation utilization in multi- institutional contexts

The aim of this paper is to analyze and assess the use of evaluation findings after conducting a participatory evaluation. For that, we focus on our experience in the mid- term evaluation of the Rural Development Plan (2000-2006) in the Basque Country. In this evaluation, our main hypothesis was that stakeholder participation would increase evaluation significance, ownership and utilization. Following this premise, once the evaluation report was written and disseminated amongst the actors who took part in the evaluation (stakeholders and local and regional institutions), we undertook specific research aimed at an assessment about the use of evaluation findings and processes. The research tools used for searching this purpose was conducting a survey amongst those participants combined with in- depth interviews to key informants.

After reviewing the obtained information, the paper analyses how relevant the evaluation was for stakeholders and regional and local institutions. The utilization of evaluation findings and processes were assessed according to four areas of influence: a) information generation, b) knowledge generation, c) oriented action (improving the program), and d) oriented policies (improving rural policies in the Basque context).The results achieved has given the opportunity to draw lessons lead to improve participatory evaluation practice in multi-institutional context so as to increase our knowledge on evaluation utilization.



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**Judging Janus: Institutionalising adjudication of the quality of sustainability evaluations and evaluators**

This paper addresses the conference topic “Political relevance of SD evaluations”; strand “Policy learning and SD evaluations”; question “What is the relationship between political culture and evaluation?” It presents results from the Marie Curie research project Accountability and Legitimacy of Governance Institutions that support Viable Environments (ALIVE) and speaks to the EASY-ECO research frame by providing analysis concerning the institutionalisation of practices and procedures for judging the quality of sustainability evaluations and evaluators.

The main empirical task of the ALIVE research has been study of the Janus-faced interface between science and politics, which is a fundamental component in many research projects conducted at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ). It is proposed that ALIVE research results are relevant for EASY-ECO because the objects of sustainability evaluations (sustainable development policies and related practices) are also Janus-faced products of this interface: reflecting, on the one hand, political will regarding what a community wishes to sustain and, on the other hand, scientific knowledge regarding the physical and social systems within which sustainable development must operate.

Five UFZ research projects have been studied under the ALIVE research, with epistemological, institutional and interest relationships between the various actors being mapped for each research project. Among the results of this research is confirmation of the research hypothesis that existing scientific and political institutions within the European Union overlook the Janus-faced political/science character of activities taking place at this interface. It is proposed that filling this institutional gap is important for improving the European Union’s capacity to judge the quality of sustainability evaluations and evaluators.

Because sustainable development policies must successfully address both aspirational and material purposes, evaluations of these policies must take into account consistency between (1) the political purpose(s) and outcome(s) of the policy and (2) the material cum scientific objectives and outcomes of the policy. This requires well organised, robust interdisciplinary research, employing both physical and social scientific analyses. However, established procedures for judging the quality of scientific research are stretched to their limits when called upon to adjudicate the quality of such work. Similarly, although, the quality of such evaluations must be judged based on how successfully scientific insights generated during the evaluation are transposed into policy learning, established procedures for adjudicating the democratic quality of scientific assessments are lacking.

Based on the ALIVE research results, it is argued that institutionalised practices for judging the quality of sustainability evaluations and evaluators can only give rise to useful policy learning if these practices can command a combination of political and scientific authority. A distinction is made between commanding political and scientific authority and commanding a combination of the two. It is argued (1) that combination is required and (2) that such combination can only be effectively achieved through establishment of new institutional structures that support the new political/science activities that are taking place at the limits of established scientific and democratic institutions.

## **Parallel sessions**

### III c Dealing with complexity

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**The insure system mapping model**

Sustainable Development is a concept, which lacks an analytical description. Quantitative models on SD reflect, so far, only partially what sustainable development might be as social vision of our future society. What is missed in the quantitative sustainable development models are the systemic relationships among the different sustainability elements or factor, social, environmental, economic, and so on. They are not missed in modelling efforts because they are not known or recognised, but because they lack of an objective founded theory, which could enable a consistent measurement. The hypothesis the INSURE project postulate is that a system qualitative model is an appropriate tool to overcome this lack. The approach followed in INSURE is to use graphical cognitive maps for the description of the net of relationships that describe systemically the key sustainability issues a region faces. The qualitative model is called System Mapping (SMA) within INSURE. The SMA faces the challenge to provide information on the regional social system as a whole. There is no universal approach to face this task. Whatever the way taken it will be heuristic in nature.

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## **Systems thinking and systems dynamics in evaluation of sustainability: The Case study of SYNAPS world**

In this article we will argue that system thinking and system dynamics can be very effective in the evaluation of sustainability, particularly in ex-ante evaluation based on the participation to the decision making through a learning process able to interlink information, knowledge and awareness. The article is divided in three sections, the first contains a review of EU policy framework, with reference to evaluation of sustainability and focusing on participation and decision making processes. The second part is describing briefly the evolution of the general system theory, system dynamics and system thinking, highlighting the importance of the use of system based methods and tools in relation with evaluation of sustainability. The third part presents a case study on a system thinking method, integrated with a web tool, called SYNAPS World, developed in the region of Skane in southern Sweden. The article finally defines the possible further development of this method with reference to his use to empower governance in evaluation of sustainability.

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## **The role of visualisation within sustainability evaluation processes**

Presuming that sustainability always deals with complex adaptive systems evaluations require the identification and analysis of elements, structures and their interactions simultaneously. Thereby special attention has to be given to the different perceptions of the involved actors on these dynamic interactions and the relevant elements. Dealing with the resulting complex networks of perceptions all too often different realities can be detected. Here visualisation is a true challenge but nevertheless of utmost importance in order to identify parallels, consonances as well as disruptions relevant to sustainability. Moreover such visualisations may capture eventually occurring trade-offs which are already inherent to the concept of sustainability. Even if conflicting goals can not be tackled in terms of clear solutions the mere visualisation can contribute to a better understanding by increasing the “perspective taking ability”.

Therefore we state that visualisation plays a crucial role within sustainability evaluation approaches. Also integrative methods to implement sustainability (such as Sustainability Foresight) include evaluative elements and make use of visualisation. Looking critically at some examples we want to examine the role of visualisation within sustainability evaluation approaches.

## **Parallel sessions**

### III d Challenges of governance and policy learning

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## **Evaluating policy coherence: the case of environmentally harmful subsidies**

Policy coherence is often mentioned as a key feature of good governance. Indeed, implementing policy instruments that counteract existing targets or programmes – e.g. regarding environmental improvements or sustainable development (SD) - is non-efficient, non-effective and undermines public support for policy programmes. Nevertheless, such policy instruments do exist. This paper illustrates an approach to evaluate the coherence problem with a focus on environmentally harmful subsidies identified in Flanders (Belgium) and Austria.

Economic instruments are considered to be the key solution for SD-problems by many scientists and practitioners. However, current use of these instruments shows a lack of policy coordination and coherence. On the one hand, environmentally related taxes are put in place to discourage harmful activities or reduce the use of harmful inputs, whereas, on the other hand, numerous financial subsidies have been in place since decades, supporting production in various economic sectors and thus the related emissions. The OECD defines such harmful subsidies as "...financial supports and regulations that are put in place to enhance the competitiveness of certain products, processes or regions, and that, together with the prevailing taxation jurisdiction, (unintentionally) discriminate against sound environmental practices". Removing these subsidies is difficult, since they have been in place for decades and have been introduced for other than environmental purposes. Nevertheless, by reducing (environmental) costs for the beneficiaries these support measures may represent a distortion and slow down the structural change towards more sustainable economic structures.

Apart from a general discussion of environmentally harmful subsidies the paper will include a comparative case study, with empirical results of studies that have been carried out in Flanders (Belgium) and Austria. It will compare policy designs and incentive effects in both countries.

The paper will also evaluate the current situation in case study sectors like energy and transport (and possibly agriculture), present policy solutions and recommendations. Finally, this paper will try to transform the methodological experiences of the two studies into conclusions that could support the development, in a further stadium, of a general methodology for evaluating similar policy coherence questions in other countries.

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## **Sustainability Evaluations in the Context of Long-Term Strategizing. Crossing Insights from Urban Development and Transition Management**

Confronted with increasing socio-environmental uncertainties coupled to a socio-political inertia to anticipate and adapt to challenges in the domain of Sustainable Development (SD), public authorities re-emphasize since years the importance of Planning and Strategizing (P&S) activities. More recently, some innovative P&S exercises saw their time horizons extended from the typical 5 years to 30 years (and more), partially in order to cope with the obvious long-term challenges in SD such as climate change, biodiversity loss, global urbanization, adaptation of consumption patterns... While these P&S activities are very different from traditional P&S (even from the typical SD-Strategy), a series of innovative approaches in the public domain have transcended recently, based notably on new interpretations of the interactions between stakeholders and public authorities. We propose to discuss in this paper the widely ignored relationship between such innovative long term P&S and Sustainability Evaluations (SE) on the hand of two different contexts: strategic planning in urban development (SP-UD) and transition management (TM).

The generic nature of evaluations in the context of P&S is at least quadruple: 1) monitor real-world evolutions with regard to the desired and conceptualized pathways; 2) assess given P&S activities in order to adapt them to emerging realities and new challenges; 3) question given P&S processes for their effectiveness, efficiency...; 4) consider the adequacy of P&S instruments in comparison to other public policy instruments which allow to integrate the (very) long term.

More particularly, because these new forms of P&S intend to participate to SD, the assigned evaluations should be discussed with reference to SE-principles and –criteria. The discussed P&S contexts present both challenges and constraints in this regard, for instance the time dimension becomes increasingly challenging as a longer term is set as a reference: issues that have traditionally been addressed in sustainability-oriented evaluations might gain momentum (e.g. accounting for intra-generational equity) or require innovations on the cognitive side (e.g. deal with uncertainty).

Strategic planning in urban development (SP-UD) and transition management (TM) are fundamentally different P&S activities in domain, scope and scale. However, while UD has traditionally been dominated by planning and is currently undergoing a transformation towards new ways of coping with SD and the long-term challenges, TM has been transposed from innovation management onto social, SD-innovation. SP-UD forces planning practices to adapt over time, in particular to the rapidly changing conditions of contemporary globalization. while TM has been specifically configured to cope with SD-challenges. Both are highly adaptable, flexible, participative, procedural... approaches to P&S, which makes them very relevant for SD policy-making and a perfect ground to apply SE-principles and –criteria.

On the basis of case study analyses, we propose for the present paper to scrutinize both forms of P&S approaches for their evaluation-practice and -moments, then to critically discuss these elements with respect to criteria and principles of Sustainability Evaluations. In a second step, both analyses (on TM and on SP-UD) will be confronted in order to cross-fertilize a series of recommendations for a better integration of SE into such P&S approaches.



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**Developing policies for government sponsored evaluation:  
contextual influences on the adequacy and  
appropriateness of alternative methodologies**

In a complex world where past practices and received wisdom are often found to be inadequate, the promise of evaluation is that it is possible to gather evidence that can lead to more informed decision-making. As such, one of the main indicators of quality evaluations is the extent to which they yield evidence that is viewed as credible and actionable by policymakers and other stakeholders. Designing evaluations that provide such evidence has never been simple and is now the focus of considerable controversy in the United States. Some federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education, have been promoting random assignment experiments as the preferred approach for demonstrating program effectiveness. The backlash to this preference for a particular design has highlighted the importance of informing government policies on evaluation methodology.

This paper summarizes a recent U.S. dialogue (reported in a volume of *New Directions for Evaluation* entitled "Informing Federal Policies on Evaluation Methodology") on promoting federal policies that support matching evaluation design with the needs of specific contexts. There is general consensus that the contextual factors most relevant for guiding the choice of evaluation methods include the stakeholder questions, the degree of desired confidence in the conclusions, the existing knowledge base, the complexity of the phenomena being studied, the degree of program maturity, the resources available for evaluation, and the ethical considerations of using one approach rather than another. The conclusions offered in this paper avoids dogmatic prescriptions but uses these factors to create a framework that can form the basis of government policies on promoting evaluations that, in turn, promote better governance.

## **Parallel sessions**

### IV a The institutionalisation of SD evaluations I

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**Sustainability assessment of local projects: Importance of the institutional procedure**

Promoting sustainable development requires not only a range of methodological tools but also clear policies to evaluate, modify and enhance the actions taken. At federal level, one of the 22 measures forming part of the “Sustainable Development Strategy 2002”<sup>1</sup> called for the development of a methodology entitled “Sustainability Assessment” (SA)<sup>2</sup>, intend to evaluate the policies, activities and projects of the Confederation using sustainable development criteria.

At cantonal and municipal level, a need is also being felt to ensure that projects in progress are proceeding along the right lines. Although numerous tools are currently available to assess local projects on the basis of sustainable development<sup>3</sup>, it is left to the cantons and municipalities wishing to use them to introduce the necessary political and administrative procedures. Today, a number of cantons and municipalities have started to perform SAs, although there are still few institutionally-embedded approaches. Much remains to be done to convince political circles and to obtain their agreement to root practices of this sort in institutions within their areas – the only way of ensuring they will remain in place over the longer term.

The Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE), the Confederation’s coordination body for Swiss policy on sustainable development, is cooperating actively with cantons, towns and cities in this field. It encourages Agenda 21-style sustainable development initiatives at municipal, cantonal and regional level, and seeks to promote the sustainability assessment of projects and to support measures to foster the introduction of this type of practice on an institutional level. A working party has therefore been established, comprising thirty representatives of cantons and municipalities as well as a number of experts in this field, to discuss recommendations<sup>4</sup>. These are based partly on site tests undertaken in four municipalities during 2006-2007, partly on the experiences of cantons, towns and cities. The aim is to encourage the public authorities to conduct this type of assessment as a matter of course, to offer practical suggestions to facilitate the process and the choice of tools and more generally, to contribute to the inclusion of sustainable development as a fixed element in the activities of local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Council (2002)

<sup>2</sup> ARE (2004a)

<sup>3</sup> ARE (2004b)

<sup>4</sup> ARE (2007)

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## **The institutionalisation of policy Evaluation Across Europe? A comparative analysis of the climate change issue**

The political saliency of climate change as an issue and the long standing pledge to pursue evidence-based policy making has heightened the expectation that future policy will be based on the best available evidence. Against this background, this paper addresses the question of the degree to which evaluation of climate change policies has become institutionalised across Europe, and the particular difficulties faced by those attempting to evaluate policy effectiveness, at the scale of member states and the EU as a whole. Its findings are based on a review of over 250 policy evaluations conducted by the EU and six of its Member States (UK, Germany, Italy, Finland, Poland and Portugal).

Our research reveals considerable variation between member states in the degree to which climate policy evaluation has become institutionalized. At one end of the scale, the UK has developed a highly formalized, official system, explicitly designed to inform policy development; at the other, states like Portugal and Poland have very little evaluation capacity. Our research also reveals interesting variations in evaluation practice, both between and within states, which makes comparing policy effectiveness across countries somewhat problematic. Even within a single member state, evaluations tend to vary widely in their coverage, methods, level of detail and transparency. These differences spring from a range of factors. Partly they are a product of the policies subject to evaluation, some of which are better monitored than others because they contain more explicit reporting requirements. They also arise because some member states take monitoring more seriously than others. There is also the problem that it is too early to evaluate the success of certain kinds of instruments, particularly those adopted as key 'common and coordinated policies and measures' (CCPMs) under the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP). Methodologically, precise cause-effect relationships may be particularly difficult to discern, and assumptions about the counter-factual or reference case (i.e. what would have happened without the policy in question) introduce important uncertainties. Timing is also important – all too often, evaluators are given insufficient time and resources to carry out their work. Finally, there is often a strongly political aspect to evaluation, whereby those commissioning or undertaking evaluations may have a vested interest in producing weak, selective or ambiguous work. While the UK evaluation system is probably the most sophisticated among our cases, all have plenty of room for improvement.

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## **Current developments in sustainability evaluation in Poland**

The point of the paper is to present Polish experience on the evaluation of sustainable development. The paper focus is on the institutional capabilities to prepare, perform and to use the results of sustainability evaluations in order to speed up and to improve sustainability implementation process. All the administration levels are investigated especially in the context of their sustainability involvement.

Another important issue mentioned here is the supply side of evaluation. In this field paper presents evaluators that have already participated in sustainability evaluations in Poland. It presents also institutions that shape sustainability evaluation culture. Final part of the paper is dedicated to the identification of major problems and assessment of future development prospects of sustainability evaluation in Poland.

## **Parallel sessions**

### **IV b The political relevance of SD evaluations II**

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## **Ecological Assessments for Regional Development in Bulgaria: Implications for Environmental Policy Integration**

Strategic environmental assessment (SEA) referred here as ecological assessment (EA), is a critical tool for integrating environmental concerns into decision-making and improving governance for sustainability. Therefore, its application and influence on the policy-making can be a useful indicator for measuring the progress towards environmental policy integration (EPI).

Essentially, this paper looks at EA for regional development in Bulgaria by exploring procedural criteria derived from the literature on EPI, including what types of EA are applied, the process of their application, public consultation and transparency. The aim of this paper is to respond to the question of application and institutionalization of assessments for regional development in Bulgaria and what are the implications for EPI in terms of learning. The methodological approach includes qualitative methods such as participant observation, in-depth open-ended interviews and desk research.

The research has found that there is a significant transfer of legislation and practice on environmental assessments in regional development and EU funds programming in Bulgaria. It has largely been enhanced throughout the accession to the European Union and the relevant requirements for harmonization of the environmental acquis. The transfer occurs as a top-down instrumental learning process for the authorities who take further steps to institutionalize the EA but seriously fail to comprehend the value and benefits of these assessments. Therefore, EA have little impact on the actual decision-making and rarely makes regional planning “greener”. At the same time, regional development in Bulgaria has a very strong tradition in terms of land use planning before the 90s when environmental analysis was a part of the planning process. Even if the wording is different, the national scientific community holds valuable expertise in environmental assessments which should be integrated into the EU-led procedures.

In conclusion, the institutionalization of environmental assessments for regional development in Bulgaria is orchestrated mainly by the EU in a top-down manner. In this way, the EA easily become the only tool for environmental policy integration and any further integration efforts are left out. Learning for improved governance, however, should be enhanced by bringing local scientific knowledge and the participation of interested stakeholders in the process. Thus, EA can actually “green” the decision-making for regional development in Bulgaria.

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## **Potential of Strategic Environmental Assessment follow-up for Institutional Learning and Collaborattion: A Case of Merseyside Local Transport Plans, UK**

SEA is an internationally recognized process for buttressing more environmentally sustainable strategic policy making. The current thinking of SEA places it in the category of proactive SD evaluations with a focus on ex ante evaluation of socio-economic and environmental impacts of strategies. Meanwhile, in reality strategies are rarely implemented according to the formulated due to uncertainty, lack of feedback etc. Thus, a shift to ex-post evaluation in SEA or SEA follow-up is needed to cope with a gap between the predicted and actual impacts of strategies.

SEA and SD literature acknowledges the promise of SEA follow up but due to virtually no research such important questions are unanswered as: Whether and how can SEA follow-up improve capacities and collaboration through feedback, feedforward and learning activities for “sustainable” realization of strategies? How can it ensure transfer of scientific and technical knowledge to future strategies?

This paper explores the potential follow-up (if it exists) to enhance institutional learning through planning cycles and to improve collaboration between tiered strategies. It adapts favourable criteria from a conceptual framework developed for a mother study, elaborates on their essence and investigates them in the context of two Merseyside Local Transport Plans.

Alongside expected outcomes such as an identified tiering and continuity principle in planning strengthening feedback and learning loops, some unexpected added values of SEA follow-up were revealed. These show that SEA follow-up a) shifts a focus to the realization of importance of social learning and collective cognitive; b) establishes, operationalizes, and maintains links within a strategy and in-between different tiers and levels; and c) supports collaboration and multiple information flows both outside and inside the implementing institution.

The paper summarises the beneficial features of SEA follow-up and concludes that it could improve learning and collaboration for successful strategy implementation in support of SD ideas.



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**SEA and the tangles of urban governance: sustainability, democracy and effectiveness**

In this paper we try to advance the debate on the evaluation of sustainable development by applying a *reflexive approach*, that is, by directing evaluation logics and methods towards a better understanding of evaluation itself. We survey Strategic Environmental Assessments of urban plans in Italy, acknowledging the three-fold nature of SEA (*procedure, process and product*). Though discussing an articulated methodology, we present full results from the first tier only, based on the analysis of ten Environmental Reports concerning as many municipal plans in different Italian Regions. Texts are deconstructed into *semantic dimensions*, yielding both *idealtypes* and *exceptions*. While making sense of our observations in order to ascertain the contribution of SEA to mainstreaming sustainability in urban governance, we bump into a number of crucial issues that may be subsumed into the categories of *democracy* and *effectiveness*.

## **Parallel sessions**

### **IV c Participation and evaluations in multi-actor systems**

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## **City monitoring as method for policy learning about urban sustainability? The case of the city monitor for liveable and sustainable Flemish cities 2006**

Since the beginning of the nineties, the Flemish Government wants to improve the liveability of its major cities: Antwerp (460.000 inhabitants), Ghent (240.000), Bruges (120.000), Leuven (90.000), Mechelen (77.000), Aalst (76.000), Kortrijk (74.000), Hasselt (70.000), Sint-Niklaas (69.000), Ostend (68.000), Genk (63.000), Roeselare (55.000) and Turnhout (40.000). Within the framework of its Urban Policy, those cities got supplementary funding. The Flemish Government expects them to improve the liveability and sustainability in the city.

The city monitor is produced to measure the progress in the Flemish cities. In fact, the city monitor is an instrument for integrated state analysis at the overall city level. The city monitor contains up to 190 indicators about the liveability and sustainability of those Flemish cities. In the first part of this paper you can read about the functions and the co-design of this policy instrument. In the second part we ask ourselves whether the city monitor is a means for policy learning about the urban sustainability. Attention is paid to viability of the city monitor as a generic instrument for policy learning in specific cities and at the implementation context of this rather strategic instrument within different city organisations. We will focus on the co-design process of the monitor and see if it is a favourable approach for multi-level and multi-actor policy learning processes. And we will ask whether the city monitor does live up to its expectations as a tool for policy learning about the urban sustainability. After all, the city monitor is meant as a learning instrument.

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**Towards a framework for sustainable development evaluations in multi-actor systems**

Sustainable development links human multi-actor systems and physical resource systems. The multi-actor dimension is increasingly visible in recent policies and governance discussions, and has important consequences for the evaluation of sustainable development policies. This paper reviews the implications this multi-actor dimension has for policy learning through sustainability evaluations, and asks how these implications can be addressed. One specific implication is discussed in detail, which is the need to learn about the roles of actors as part of explaining the success or failure of the policy under evaluation. A conceptual framework for the role of actors in sustainable development policies is elaborated, and methods to analyze multi-actor systems are discussed as promising instruments that help to gain a better understanding of the success or failure of sustainable development policies.

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## **Evaluation of Public Participation towards Sustainable Water Management: An Institutional Perspective**

This paper aims at introducing a set of principles to evaluate the institutions of public participation towards collective action in sustainable management of common-pool resources. For this purpose, a conceptual framework is developed and applied. The framework includes basic elements of common-pool resource management as a socio-ecological system and the interactions among the elements.

Building on a previous approach for categorising the institutions of collective action as nested rules intertwined in hierarchical levels, the institutional implications of the framework are explored, and three categories for the institutions public participation are introduced, namely zero-order, first-order and second-order institutions.

The characteristics of institutions in each category and their relationship with other categories are described and investigated by applying framework to the case of irrigation water as an example of common-pool resources. The method used for the application of the framework is secondary analysis of the results from a field study. Findings indicate that different types of institutions at various participation levels are inherent.

## **Parallel sessions**

### **IV d Case studies III**

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## Monitoring and evaluation research of energy efficiency policy deployment

Serbian Energy Efficiency Project<sup>1</sup>, corresponding to a millennium goal of sustainable development is, methodologically wise, completely innovative. Parallel with defined Project's objectives, it brings in an innovatively developed M&E approach, named "Parallel Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication".

In this paper we will focus on following aspects that approach involves:

- 1) Participatory M&E of goal achievements
- 2) Research of the resonant effect of Project's impacts, thus Impact Evaluation
- 3) Evaluation of the overall energy efficiency policy → Instrumental and Conceptual
- 4) Communication of M&E research results, outcomes and policy impacts

Methodology interactively encompasses various criteria and aspects, from technical and economic, to social and environmental.

Evaluation also encircles:

- Instrumental impacts – implementation of energy efficiency measures, achieved savings, reduced environmental impacts.
- Conceptual impacts - energy efficiency awareness raising, knowledge improvement and spreading, increase in beneficiaries satisfaction and comfort, changes in behavioural patterns, changes in public discourse.

This innovative approach forms a divine fusion of several, completely different sciences. These include technical sciences, comprising architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, economy, finance and financial analysis. Human sciences like sociology, psychology and the relatively new branch communicology are also used within this approach.

None of the above mentioned expertises is a solely used, thus their "collaboration"© produces a synergetic result in final evaluation!

By designing a methodology approach, we faced the most challenging task of how to compare inputs. That is how to find "common denominator" – etalon – that would serve as derivative unit for comparison. Or, how to face "one to one":

Physical parameters (E.g. temperature or heat consumption)	→ VS. →	Psychological parameters (E.g. perception, satisfaction, disapproval)	→ VS. →	Public opinion Public discourse Public Outreach
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This has been a challenge even to an experienced researcher to set up a basic standpoint.

<sup>1</sup> Serbian Energy Efficiency Project – World Bank Credit (IDA Credit YF3870) – Sustainability Project

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**SEA of Structural funds' operational programmes for 2007-2013 in Romania**

Majority of European Union Structural Funds' Programmes for the period of 2007 to 2013 have been screened to undergo the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) based on the EC Directive 2001/42/EC. In Romania 4 SEAs have been carried out for Operational Programmes (OPs) for Environment, Transport, Regional Development and Economic Competitiveness within one project by an international expert team within one contract as a part of "Ex-ante Evaluation" project. The case describes the methodology and the process used in the assessment of the group of OPs and lessons learned in the application of the chosen methodology - "Handbook on SEA for Cohesion Policy 2007 - 2013" developed by the Greening Regional Development Programmes Network (INTERREG IIIC project, 2006). Environmental reports and OPs have been approved by the Government of Romania and accepted by the European Commission. The methodology applied proved to be constructive and effective for the SF programmes. The "classical" difficulties faced in the process were the late start of the assessment, the lack of time and inadequate public involvement.



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## **Merging collaborative planning and environmental valuation for eliciting preferences for a National Park designation in Northern Ireland.**

This paper provides the theoretical framework and describes the preliminary steps for combining collaborative planning and non market valuation techniques to improve the decision making process in land use decisions. Combining components of Collaborative Planning (CP) — a Planning theory seeking to achieve the highest level of consensus possible amongst all stakeholders — with non market valuation techniques (Travel Cost, Contingent Behaviour (CB) and Choice Experiments (CE)) - widely used in environmental economics — this study attempts to elicit the preferences of the Northern Ireland population which could be affected by the proposed designation of a National Park. The CP elements of public participation are first used as an aid to design the CE survey instrument and then explored as a means of the validation of results analysed from the CE survey. In a CB and a CE survey, key attributes are set at varying levels and make up the choice sets. In order for the welfare estimates to be calculated from the CE study, a cost attribute must be included within the survey.

## **Parallel sessions**

V a The institutionalisation of SD evaluations II

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**Monitoring towards more sustainable energy policies? A comparative assessment of procedures and political impacts in Norway and Sweden**

Norway and Sweden are generally viewed as two well-performing states on sustainable development (SD), including policies for renewable energy and energy efficiency. This paper provides a comparative assessment of SD-related monitoring procedures vis-à-vis stationary energy production and use in these two countries. The paper further assesses whether such mechanisms constitute a basis for evaluations of energy policy outputs and/or outcomes, and whether this eventually results in policy adjustments to improve SD performance.

The Swedish monitoring system is characterized by a more independent mandate, and is more adapted to policy evaluation, than the Norwegian system. While few policy changes can be ascribed directly, the Swedish parliamentarians are more extensively engaged in assessing alternative policy options and consequences than their Norwegian colleagues.

The paper outlines a preliminary explanation of these differences. A relatively higher general political priority of SD-related objectives, together with a more coherent structure of the energy sector stand out as important variables explaining Sweden's more robust monitoring system for energy.

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**Role of local sustainable development strategies in improving access to eu funds: a case study from Nitra District, Slovakia**

The paper summarises institutional and legal framework of local sustainability in Slovakia, and analyses, how different aspects of planning influence future development of micro-regions and local municipalities. It gives an overview of initiatives and projects, which introduced principles of sustainable development on the regional and local level. After EU accession in May 2004, Slovak municipalities, similarly to others in 10 newcomer countries, had an opportunity to use Structural Funds in shortened programming period of 2004-2006. In ideal case, the projects had to consider equally all pillars of sustainable development. Taking into consideration unfavourable conditions of economy in small municipalities, in practice, we are experiencing support to solutions negatively influencing local environment through urban sprawl and land take. The paper analyses role of local sustainable development strategies in improving access to EU Funds, based on results of a questionnaire survey in Nitra District.

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## **Evaluation of green public procurement -ideas, plans and methods**

Green public procurement is a priority of the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (Brussels, 28.1.2004 COM(2004) 38 final) the Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy of the EU (Brussels, 9 June 2006 10117/06) and most probably of the forthcoming Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan as it is in the background document on the consultation for an SCP Action Plan which has been launched in 2007. Since 2002 steps to enhance GPP are taken mostly alongside the Integrated Product Policy of the EU. The Commission encourages Member States in the IPP Communication (Communication on Integrated Product Policy Brussels, 18.6.2003 COM (2003) 302 final) to set National Action Plans for greening the public procurement by the end of 2006. According to DG ENV by that date 10 Member States have adopted draft national action plans and 9 more were working towards it.

In every strategy and action plan it is crucial how to measure the results, with which methods and tools can be the process best monitored and evaluated.

In this paper we would like to give a picture of the ideas, plans and methods for measuring, monitoring and evaluating green public procurement by analyzing a survey already done, existing National Action Plans and theoretical issues as well.. By this we would like to identify the best ways for the evaluation of this (still) voluntary environmental policy tool.

## **Parallel sessions**

V b Administrative cultures and power

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**Evaluators as a part of a sustainable development policy**

I would like to explain in this paper the role of evaluators in the context of different epistemological premises. At present there are two methodological approaches in science that represent mechanistic and evolutionary thinking. The concept of sustainable development reflects the epistemological premises of the latter. Hence, social development is understood in terms of continuous changes in a process of selective adaptation. As there are numerous strategies of the adaptation, there is not only one infallible proposal that ensures the needs of future generations. Thus, we can only recognize whether a particular strategy is devoid of the failures we know from the past and how we should avoid risks in future.

The premises of post-normal science change the role of evaluators. Firstly, they do not work in a well-defined setting, a universal context, and with well-established knowledge. Secondly, they are value-oriented. Thirdly, they participate in a process of continuous changes. The process of evaluation is a kind of discourse between stakeholders, decision-makers, and project creators, while taking into account an evaluator's values and the principles of a utilized referential framework.

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**Whose time is it? A “temporal” approach to evaluation: time perspective as a dimension of boundary judgments and evaluation**

The majority, if not all, of policy making decisions have delayed consequences, which either occur gradually and cumulatively throughout a period of time, or in a later time point. Within the domain of water resources management, many consequences are interrelated, complex and delay is more eminent. Referring to Ainslie's (2005) definition among many similar others, as choice between options whose consequences occur at different points in time is an intertemporal decision and regarding the delay inherent in their consequences, water related decisions can be considered as intertemporal. Therefore, decision makers must make tradeoffs between outcomes occurring at different points in time (Loewenstein, 1998): immediate loss versus future gain, etc. Further, as evidenced by numerous research, most conflict and resource dilemma cases have a temporal component, as short term versus long term interests. Essentially, delay of consequences inherent in water-related decisions has a reducing impact, as people typically find it hard to judge the future consequences. Yet, tendency to perceive future consequences is closely related with some cultural, contextual or personal variables, such as temporal orientation, time horizon, discount rate, etc. This paper aims to address the variability of actors' temporal perspectives in making policy decisions and in evaluating them within the domain of water resources management; and to make a point in the impact of these variations on boundary spanning activities and evaluation of policies, which would then be searched through a further empirical study. In other words, the paper tries to pose some questions for further empirical research within the focus of temporal perspective.



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## **Sustainable development in Lithuania: between the governmental agenda and the undiscovered civil society**

This paper presents a comprehensive evaluation of policies and governance for sustainable development in Lithuania. It starts with an evaluation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) as a top-down governmental initiative. The authors diagnose that the main obstacle for an effective strategy of sustainable development is a lack of public participation in the formulation, review and implementation processes, which implies that Lithuania still follows the "government" paradigm rather than "governance", which is a post-Soviet relict. The analysis of "bottom-up" activities shows that people are poorly familiar with the concept of sustainable development and with NSSD in general. The results also suggest that the society is rather passive in individual environment-friendly initiatives. Thus, promotion of civil society, involvement of civil society organizations in decision-making processes and encouraging individual activities are recognized as crucial issues for successful implementation of sustainable development in Lithuania.

## **Parallel sessions**

V c Methodological challenges and  
innovations in SD evaluations

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***Terry Marsden******Alex Franklin******Andrea Collins*****Building sustainable communities: an interrogative model for progressing towards sustainability<sup>1</sup>**

This paper addresses the methodological challenges and innovations of 'governance by evaluation' by introducing a new project on 'Motivating, Engaging, Leading and Supporting Skills and Knowledge for Sustainable Communities- Applying Models of Sustainable Localised Economies'. This work is led by the Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS<sup>2</sup>) at Cardiff University, UK, and jointly funded by the Economic and Social Research Centre (ESRC) and Academy of Sustainable Communities (ASC). The project responds to a growing academic and policy interest in the role of skills in delivering sustainable communities. The overarching aim of the project is to develop an interrogative model to assist communities to identify what is needed to progress towards sustainability. It focuses on the role of skills, knowledge, and training along four spheres of production and consumption: food, energy, transport and the home. This paper provides a brief overview of the key drivers behind the interest in skills for sustainable communities agenda and concludes with an introduction to the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Do not cite without the author's permission.

<sup>2</sup> [www.brass.cf.ac.uk](http://www.brass.cf.ac.uk)

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**What gets lost in the computer? Putting evaluation findings on sustainability initiatives into context by analysing interviewers' scribbles on questionnaires**

Since contextual issues are central to understanding local sustainable development (SD) programs, this paper argues, that evaluators should actively collect all sorts of rich, contextual information and use them to triangulate findings from statistical analysis of questionnaires. Otherwise the evaluation of SD programs and processes (e.g. LA21, LEADER+) might be limited in reflecting what is actually happening on the ground and in delivering relevant conclusions and suggestions. On the example of an extensive SD evaluation case, I present a possible way of using interviewers' scribbles and other background information to explore process dynamics and the multidimensional nature of local SD initiatives. I also discuss concrete examples from this evaluation case, illustrating the differences in data quality between data coming from statistical analysis and from interviewers' scribbles. I conclude, that combining the statistical analysis with soft background information allows more "evidence based" evaluation results, than evaluations that ignore such soft data and analyse only the "facts" from the questionnaires.

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**Learning from other disciplines: Development Studies**

It is puzzling that sustainability experts normally commence their accounts with the Brundtland Commission of 1987, as though development, and development projects, had not been carried out for decades and even centuries before then. Despite their emphasis on economic, environmental and social issues alike, sustainability experts still focus principally on Western environmental and economic expert knowledge. Development studies, and especially social anthropology have not yet been considered sufficiently. This paper demonstrates the insights that social anthropology and development studies have to offer by highlighting issues of power, and of misunderstandings between outside experts and the so-called target populations. In particular, the use of the term 'participation' and 'stakeholder meetings' by sustainability experts is scrutinised through the review of development literature. These insights could have practical value for the co-ordinators and evaluators of sustainable development projects. The practical lessons include a need for greater self-reflection on the part of sustainability professionals, for the constitution of interdisciplinary teams that include anthropologists or experts familiar with the communities concerned, and for medium to long term programme time-frames.

## **Parallel sessions**

V d Using multi-criteria analysis

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## **Significance of environment in the assessment of sustainable development: the case for South West Victoria.**

The assessment of sustainable development is often based on the three pillars of sustainability model or triple bottom line using a set of indicators that evaluate the social, economic and environmental systems. It is thought that by measuring the performance of each system information can be gained about the sustainability of the whole system. However, this represents a disconnect between sustainability theory and the practice of sustainability evaluation as there is no attempt to evaluate if this assumption is true. During the development of a sustainability assessment framework for south west Victoria, Australia, it has become evident that this approach to sustainability assessment does not provide an accurate evaluation of system sustainability. Throughout this project, from stakeholder prioritisation of indicators to final multiple criteria analysis of sustainability, the environmental indicators were found to be the most important for the region's sustainability. As a consequence, the assessment produced shows that in south west Victoria, sustainability is largely determined by the condition of the environment. This finding highlights the current disconnection between theory and the reality of sustainability. Thus, we discuss a framework for sustainability assessment that attempts to re-connect theory to practice.

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## **Incorporating policy makers' preferences for ex ante evaluation of energy and climate policy interactions: development of a criteria weights integrated elicitation technique**

Evaluation of energy and climate policy interactions is a high complex issue which has not been addressed systematically. Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) evaluation processes have been applied widely to different policy and decision cases as they have the ability to cope with high complexity, by structuring and analyzing the policy problem in a transparent and systematic way. Criteria weights elicitation techniques are developed within the framework of MCDA to integrate stakeholders' preferential information in the decision making and evaluation process. There are variant methods to determine criteria weights which can be used in various ways for different policy evaluation purposes. During decision making, policy makers and relevant stakeholders implicitly or explicitly express their relative importance between the evaluation criteria by assigning weighting factors to them. More particular, climate change policy problems lack a simple, transparent and structured way to incorporate stakeholders' views and values. In order to incorporate stakeholders' weighting preferences into an ex ante evaluation of climate change and energy policy instruments interaction, an integrative constructive weighting methodology has been developed.

This paper presents the main characteristics of evaluation of energy and climate policy interactions, the reasoning behind the development of the weighting tool, its main theoretical and functional characteristics and the results of its application to obtain and incorporate stakeholders' preferences on energy and climate change policy evaluation criteria.

The weighting method that has been elaborated and applied to derive stakeholders' preferences for criteria weights is a combination of pair wise comparisons and ratio importance weighting methods. First introduces stakeholders to a warming up holistic approach for ranking evaluation criteria and then requires them to express their ratio relative importance in pair wise comparisons of criteria by providing them an interactive mean with verbal and visual representation of their preferences. An excel aided tool has been developed for this purpose to facilitate the user (stakeholder) to intervene to the decision making and evaluation process and set his preferences that determine the outcome of policy interactions evaluation. The developed tool has been tested at an experiment examining how stakeholders' preferences and objectives can be derived towards different evaluation climate change and energy evaluation criteria. The paper concludes by stating users' evaluation views on the application of the methodology.



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**Multi-criteria Analysis as a potential tool for evaluating nature conservation policy**

The assessment of environmental projects has been traditionally approached by Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA). This monetary evaluation method falls short of being a consistent tool within an increasingly complex policy-making context. Drawbacks are revealed regarding both methodological limits and sustainability approach faced. Thus, whether CBA is a suitable method for evaluating nature conservation policy is brought into question.

In addition, the potentiality of Multi-criteria Analysis (MCA) as an evaluation tool for evaluating sustainability issues is argued. Unlike CBA, MCA is compatible with different sustainability approaches. MCA is used to address multiple objectives as well as multidimensional issues in complex policy-making context. It is also thought multi-criteria methods are generally well-fitted in conservation policy context derived from the wide range of attributes of protected areas.

Lastly, the application of a particular multi-criteria evaluation method to the conservation policy in the Basque Country is explored as an attempt in the early days of a project on the topic. It is believed that public participation, transparency and inter/multi-disciplinary approach that the Social Multi-criteria Evaluation involves are adequate features for the evaluation of this policy.