

An analysis of ISA-related tools in their policy context - WP 2

Methods and Tools for Integrated Sustainability Assessment



Aims and Objectives

The aim of WP 2 is to provide the MATISSE project with a systematic and structured overview of current ISA-related tools, and a context specific analysis of how they are actually being used by stakeholders in day-to-day policy making. As such, it provides insights into the 'real world' needs of policy makers and identifies the various constraints conditioning their selection and use of ISA tools. The analysis focusses on the four main case study areas covered by MATISSE.

The entry point for the analysis are systems of Sustainability Impact Assessments (i.e. the EU Commission's Integrated Assessment (IA) regime governing EU policy making). But it also seeks to capture many other dimensions of SIA use, particularly those in other parts of the EU (e.g. the European Parliament), and at national and regional levels of governance, where experience of undertaking SIAs is known to be more fully developed.

The WP is evaluating the actual use of different tools in relation to the ISA approach, in order to identify where and why there are significant differences between the two. That is to say, how is SIA currently being deployed, and what stands between the pattern of current practice and the practice of ISA in Europe?

Activities

To this end, empirical studies are being carried out in the EU, the UK, Sweden and Germany.

The approach is deductive i.e. producing a "thick" description of the 'real world' use of SIA tools. Data is being collected through documentary analyses of published databases at European and national (Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK) levels, and interviews with those producing guidance documentation, as well as current and potential users of SIA, to understand their motivations and experiences. Data analysis is carried out using the multi-dimensional characterisation of ISA tools developed in WP1.

About the MATISSE project

MATISSE aims to achieve a step-wise advance in Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) of EU policies. The core activity of MATISSE is to improve the tools available for conducting Integrated Sustainability Assessments. The case studies provide the real-world contexts within which the ISA methodology and tools can be assessed. Stakeholders have a central role within ISA.

What is ISA?

Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) is a cyclical, participatory process of scoping, envisioning, experimenting, and learning through which a shared interpretation of sustainability for a specific context is developed and applied in an integrated manner, in order to explore solutions to persistent problems of unsustainable development.

Other Briefing Sheets

- Conceptual Framework for ISA
- Agriculture, Forestry, Land Use Case Study
- Dematerialisation Case Study
- Water Case Study
- Environmental Technologies Case study
- Using and Improving Existing ISA Tools
- Developing New ISA Tools
- Dissemination

- Finalise a benchmarked inventory of currently used SIA tools
- Relate this inventory to the ISA approach
- Analyse how all these tools are actually being used 'in context' by policy-makers in different institutional settings
- Identify institutional capacities and needs for the future use of ISA-related tools

Products

- A benchmarked inventory of commonly used sustainability assessment tools
- An analysis of the relationship between these tools and the model of ISA developed in WP1
- An institutional account of ISA/SIA use 'in context' across the case study domains
- A summary of current institutional capacities and the obstacles standing in the way of a wider uptake of ISA tools, focusing specifically on the four MATISSE case study domains.

WP 2 draws heavily on the results of WP1. At the same time, the results of WP2 will especially inform the direction of WP8 (and WP9) in the second phase of the project.

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MATISSE



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Find more information at www.matisse-project.net



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