

A conceptual, theoretical and methodological framework for ISA – WP 1

Methods and Tools for Integrated Sustainability Assessment



Overview

The overall objective of WP1 is to define the overarching conceptual, theoretical, and analytical paradigm to be used in MATISSE for the development of ISA and thereby provide focus and secure consistency within the consortium and contribute to guiding the science and practice of ISA development more generally. The framework will be used by all the MATISSE case studies and in the development of improved and new ISA tools for policy assessment and transition management.

The WP explores what is implied by the term 'integrated assessment' vis-à-vis assessing the multiple dimensions of sustainability in an integrated fashion, assessing individual policies and policy combinations for their compatibility with sustainability goals and with each other and assisting in the design of integrated sustainability policies.

Activities

MATISSE starts from a set of concepts, working definitions, assumptions and hypotheses, which are being refined and revised during the first phase of the project. An adaptive management approach based upon establishing a continuing consortium-wide dialogue is being used. Methods used to inform the dialogue include: reviews of the relevant literatures; discussions within the communities of ISA developers, commissioners and users; state-of-the-art reviews of available theories, concepts, tools and methods that could contribute to ISA; role/need/gap analyses; conceptual modelling of important causal relationships and impact pathways that must be reflected in the architecture of an ISA; liaising with other Framework 6 projects; and, the development of reference principles and criteria for ISA development, implementation and evaluation.

Discourse and systemic synthesis on sustainability and its assessment The approach involves an operational and theoretical discourse and systemic synthesis on sustainability, and its critical subsystems, components and interrelationships in relation to sustainability assessment of policies, programmes and other drivers of (un)sustainable developments.

Definition of integrated sustainability assessment The work involves a theoretically-based analysis of sustainability assessment concepts covering domains of application, functions/roles, scope, tools/methods and processes, etc.

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

- Current Use of ISA Policies and Tools
- 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

Establish an ambitious vision for ISA in the European context and related development

requirements The work is focussed on the role of ISA in exploring solutions to persistent problems of unsustainable development. It explores what might theoretically constitute ISA in Europe, including the potential relation to the sustainability strategy of the EU.

Products

- An operational vision of sustainability in relation to integrated assessment of policy and non-policy drivers and developments in systems of interest.
- Theoretically-founded definitions and typologies of sustainability assessment. Benchmarks and evaluation concepts for these based on uses, applications, and “fitness for purpose” criteria.
- A normative vision of the potential of ISA in relation to sustainability assessment in Europe; principles, requirements and criteria for ISA development in order to fulfil this potential.

This work package liaises with related Framework 6 projects on sustainability indicators/thresholds, the internalisation of externalised costs and risk handling so that insights from these projects are integrated smoothly and consistently in MATISSE

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MATISSE



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Find more information at www.matisse-project.net



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