



New EFAEP Working Groups

Dear EFAEP Members,

Following on from the excellent number of proposals that we received for new Working Groups (WGs), we are now in a position where we can start to move forward with several of them. We would kindly ask that you circulate the information on the various WGs (below) to your membership to find those members who have both the enthusiasm and necessary experience to volunteer to join a group and to follow through with the proposals of that group.

The first role of the newly set up WGs will be to establish their objectives and goals for the coming year, in accordance with the summary Terms of Reference for the WGs (the full Terms of Reference will be approved at the Porto General Assembly).

Please can you forward all details of interested members (name, e-mail address, experience, etc.) to the named contact for the specific WG (details at the bottom of each description below) and also to the EFAEP Co-ordinator (coordinator@efaep.org) and the Nominated ExCo member (exco@lists.efaep.org).

Kind regards,
Jan Karel Mak, President

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1. BIODIVERSITY

An Introduction to Biodiversity

Biodiversity encompasses the diversity of biological life on earth, from ecosystems through species to genes. There is clear evidence that the current loss of global biodiversity is occurring at a rate never before experienced except at the times of mass extinctions that ended major geological epochs. There is also growing evidence that many ecosystem services - the economic and life-support systems derived from nature and upon which mankind relies – require functioning communities of plants, animals and other organisms.

Focus

All projections of future demands for food, water, land and energy predict that biodiversity will come under ever greater threats. As emphasised by the many events and activities that will take place in 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB), policy-makers with biodiversity briefs require as never before the best scientific, practical and professional advice about the current state of biodiversity, the causes and consequences of biodiversity change, and interventions to help manage biodiversity.

In a move strongly supported by our organisations, at the 2001 EU Leaders Summit in Gothenburg the UK went beyond this to agree to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. However, there is general agreement that this goal will not be met. Government (national, regional and local), NGOs, industry and all other organisations involved in the environment require focussed scientific input to formulate the best policies affecting biodiversity.

The EFAEP Biodiversity Working Group could consider adapting and then adopting the IYB objectives which are:

- Raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity for human well-being and promote understanding of the economic value of biodiversity.
- Enhance public knowledge of the threats to biodiversity and means to conserve it.
- Encourage organizations (and through them individuals) to take direct or indirect biodiversity conservation activities.
- Celebrate the achievements of Countdown 2010 partners and other stakeholders.
- Reporting on the possible failures for not achieving the Target.
- Prepare the ground for communicating the post-2010 target(s).

Finding a Niche for the EFAEP Working Group

There are already lots of international platforms on biodiversity however, so the EFAEP Biodiversity Working Group will need to find an appropriate niche and role.

Several of the existing international fora are science-oriented (Diversitas), project based (EU funds for TEEB) or institutional (ENCA). The EEA-Copenhagen collects national information from Topic Centres and other contributing research organizations across Europe. This list is far from complete and a suggested first task for the working group could be to map this network. Within this network, we will have to find a specific role for our international association of environmental professionals, to avoid repeating efforts, such as repeating reviews on scientific literature.

Environmental professionals are able to bring together academic knowledge and experiences from practice. This should deliver insights into what works and what does not for present or future biodiversity policies, strategies or targets.

In an international context, this could bring together experiences from different countries, that each have national policies to protect/conservate biodiversity. Some of these are/will be harmonized by European regulations, where others are not.

Hope to Achieve

1. Establish an EFAEP position paper on biodiversity in the UN declared "International Year of Biodiversity (IYB)" – 2010 and beyond the Countdown 2010 target.
2. Influence the post 2010 biodiversity targets.
3. Providing insight into regional and national solutions will assist efforts to speed the international mainstreaming of policy efforts. This could also provide comparisons between policy positions (e.g. preservation/protection compared to ecosystem service approach).

Work Programme

We will need to fit in and act in advance of these ITB and Countdown events. Key events to consider:

1-5 February 2010	Getting the biodiversity targets right – working for sustainable development	Trondheim, Norway
24-26 February 2010	11th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council	Bali, Indonesia
13-21 May 2010	14th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity	Nairobi, Kenya
20-21 September 2010	United Nations General Assembly	New York, USA
18-29 October 2010	Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10)	Nagoya, Japan

The main focus this year should be the CBD COP10 in Nagoya and the run up to that event. It would be great if EFAEP could be present at that moment, and if not actually present then to have had an impact on the process and to have also set out:

- The "kick off" of the international working group with its aims and steps for the post-2010 period (why a working group within EFAEP, position and role in between other organisations e.g. Club of Rome, Leaders for Nature, etc.).
- A position paper or a view on the targets for 2020 and a vision for 2050. Highlights could be given by then, possibly covering:
 - why the urgency;
 - position on TEEB - suggestions for the valuation of biodiversity, "one" currency for biodiversity, business cases;
 - suggestions on how to raise awareness (exchange good practices);
 - suggestions how to organise the needed transition).

Working Group Chair

Acting Chair until Working Group members confirmed: Mike Barker; IEEM

Ideas on how to act together

- Mainly by a social network via the internet – potentially a web forum to exchange knowledge, ideas and experiences and to have a platform for discussions.
- Once in a year a meeting with the core-team of workers.
- Organising debate and symposia on these topics.
- Exchange of experience for environmental professionals.
- Lobby activities at the European level aimed at influencing European policy.

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2. CLIMATE-PROOF CITIES

Climate change will cause multiple effects. Trends are expected to continue, although there is still substantial uncertainty about the rate of climate change itself and its possible impacts. It can be assumed that many countries and regions will be able to (partly) adapt to these changes and lower their vulnerability. Future vulnerability is influenced by (choices in) spatial and non-spatial development, requiring a long-term adaptation strategy and a targeted policy agenda.

Urban areas are faced with the combined task of controlling both water nuisance due to heavy rainfall, drought due to extreme dry periods, heat stress during heat waves, health problems due to air pollution smog episodes, and water flooding due to sea level rise and/or increased river discharges. Moreover, due to their dense populations, urban areas are vulnerable to possibly increased risks related to allergies from pollen exposure and to infectious diseases transmitted by vectors or through exposure of (polluted) recreation water.

The climate resilience of urban areas can be increased through spatial and non-spatial adaptation measures. Especially during urban restructuring and development of new urban areas, there is a window of opportunity for combining the task of providing climate resilience with other aims of national government policy, such as improving the quality of the physical environment and reducing energy consumption (including related greenhouse gas emissions). Such adaptation measures could include increasing the area and attractiveness of 'green' (nature, parks, trees) and 'blue' (water) in and near cities (increasing the water storage capacity and reducing the heat stress), energy-saving buildings and new sustainable energy technologies, such as solar cells or thermal energy storage. Recent studies have shown that the additional costs of energy-saving buildings and utilizing sustainable energy in urban areas can be recovered within 10 to 15 years.

Cities therefore face many challenges to develop a climate-proof spatial strategy. Climate-proofing is therefore a factor of importance in the decision-making process around urban restructuring and development. Choices to be made in the years and decades to come will inevitably influence the future vulnerability of many urban areas. New preconditions have to be developed to increase the climate resilience of urban areas. Building energy-efficient city structures, and creating parks and ponds in urban areas, are examples of combining multiple policy goals of urban development.

It is urgently warranted that environmental and (city) spatial planning specialists join forces to exchange experience in urban climate change vulnerability and resilience and to share their ideas to contribute to adaptation strategies and policies

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3. DIFFUSE SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTANTS

Introduction of the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR) (<http://prtr.ec.europa.eu/>) is the new Europe-wide register that provides easily accessible key environmental data from industrial facilities in European Union Member States and in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It replaces and improves upon the previous European Pollutant Emission Register (EPER). The new register contains data reported annually by 24,000 industrial facilities covering 65 economic activities across Europe. For each facility, information is provided concerning the amounts of pollutant releases to air, water and land as well as off-site transfers of waste and of pollutants in waste water from a list of 91 key pollutants including heavy metals, pesticides, greenhouse gases and dioxins for the year 2007. Some information on releases from diffuse sources is also available and will be gradually enhanced. There are only a few measurement methods for diffuse sources of air pollutants. The releases have to be estimated in different ways. It is a task for the future, to establish a unique way for all European countries to handle diffuse sources the same way. The first step should be to classify the procedure on how the EU member states deal with that agreement.

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4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

Focus of the WG:

The WG will focus on the EIA and SEA European directives and their acknowledgment/application at national level. Below is the draft of possible milestones/tasks:

1. Selection of countries depending on WG subscriptions;
2. Review of directives' application in the selected countries and identification of the role of environmental professionals;
3. Review of selected case studies;
4. Collection and selection of best practices (national environmental agencies and /or research centres and /or universities could be directly contacted to gain additional information on existing good practices¹);
5. Contact with other associations, i.e. International Association for Impact Assessment IAIA <http://www.iaia.org/> and <http://www.iaiaitalia.org/> ;
6. Selection of conferences and seminars to be considered as possible meeting location and for the presentation of papers or posters, naturally released with EFAEP name;
7. Release of an EFAEP report (for external distribution) or WG report (for internal distribution) on relevant EIA and SEA issues identified.

Attention will be paid particularly to mitigation and compensation measures and techniques, both obligatory and voluntary, and to the identification of the best application of EIA and SEA to soil depletion and offsets.

Background and motivation

Experience taught that the most difficult aspect is to identify solutions to mitigate the environmental impact of projects or programs in an objective manner and with scientific bases. *Ex-post* evaluation, end-of-pipe processes and remedial actions are in most of the cases driven by the regulation which for example defines the concentration limits/targets for contaminants in soil and water. This is not the case of the *ex-ante* evaluation of projects and plans where there is a lack of shared knowledge, methodology and best practices. Environmental professionals play an important role in each EU country esp. in national and regional plans, programmes and projects.

In Italy and other EU countries there is an ongoing and growing activity (seminars, conferences, debates) about this subject and a fair return in terms of attendees, which signal a common need of rules/ common practices besides legislation.

In particular, for regional projects the EIA process is at the expenses of the tender which must submit the documentation to the public authorities. When environmental professionals are engaged by private parties, it often happens that mitigation and offsets proposals are eliminated or reduced for private interest during the early stages of the EIA/SEA process, before it arrives to the public authorities. A key aspect for the WG will deal is the identification of the best application of EIA and SEA to land use and ecological offsets which are often neglected.

EFAEP WG can take a central professional role in the framework of common European regulation and of common European procedures on this subject (see box below).

Expected results:

- Reports or posters to be presented at seminars (see *e.g.* <http://www.iaia.org/conferences/>)
- An overview on national applications of EIA/SEA and release of an EFAEP technical guideline to highlight mitigation and compensation actions esp. with regard to land use.

Group management

Group members will be asked to contribute actively and to share the work programme (reports, contacts, communication, etc.). The group manager will be temporary Silvia Montanari who will give way to whoever once members and proposal will be confronted in a kick-off conference call (suggested VoIP devices as Skype).

Subscribers and notes

Till now people, making part of AISA, who desired get involved are Leonardo Marotta, Silvia Montanari, Diego Marazza, Lorenzo Benini and Stefano Costa.

In case of additional EFAEP members' lack, AISA will open this working group anyway. The WG will be open to other Italian associations get involved in these tasks.

¹ See: The EU project SENSOR develops ex-ante Sustainability Impact Assessment Tools (SIAT) to support decision making on European land use and environmental policies. The project relates directly to the efforts of the EC, on behalf of the European Union (EU), to integrate all single sector policy assessment into one impact assessment procedure

Figure 1

Ex-ante Impact Assessment (IA) was officially introduced into European Commission (EC) policy making in 2002. It is understood as a formal procedure to analyse potential effects of new policies before their adoption. The two main drivers behind this EC initiative are the *EU Sustainable Development Strategy* and the *Better Regulation* agenda. IA is carried out on policy level by the Secretariat General of the EC. In parallel, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) exist. They are based at EC Directorate of Environment. EIA analysis impacts of project on the environment and SEA is concerned with impacts of plans and programmes mainly on the environment.

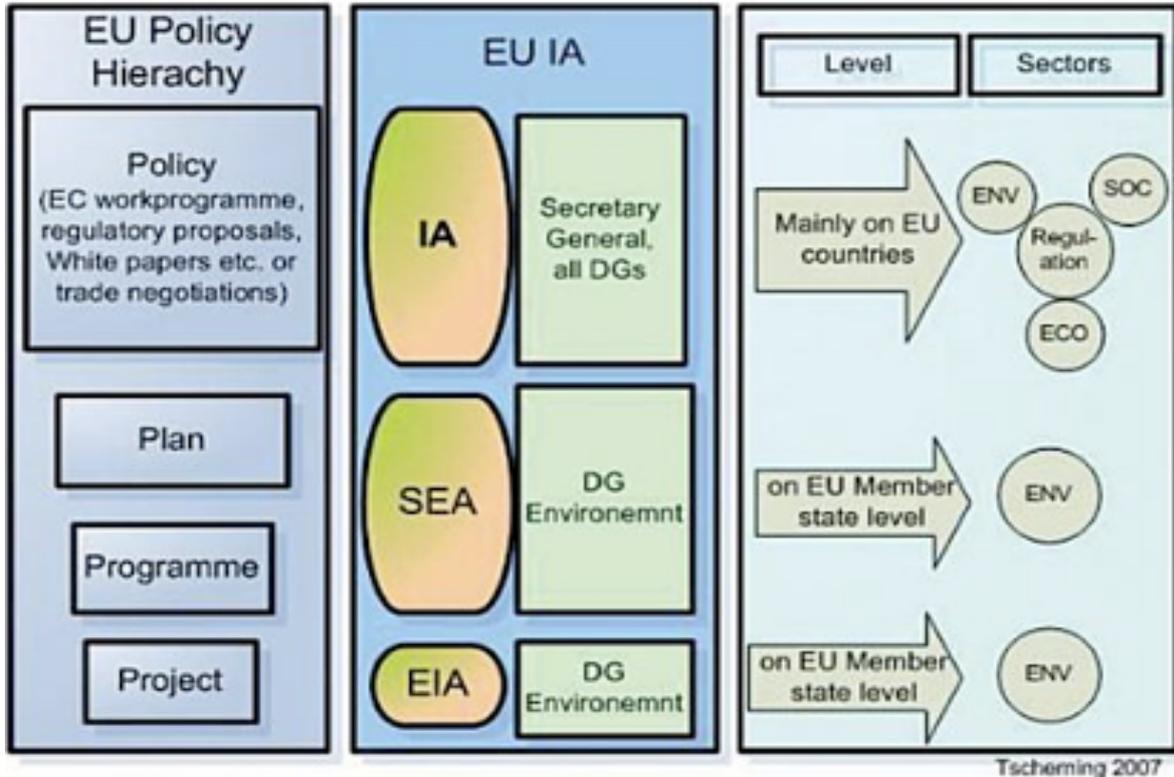


Illustration 1: classification of the EU assessment

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5. GREEN POWER SUPPLY

Comparing approaches used throughout Europe for “green power supply”

Introduction

Energy markets are now liberalized throughout Europe and the number of suppliers offering “green energy” to consumers is steadily increasing. But do they all sell exactly the same thing? What do they really mean by “green energy”? Does choosing green energy yield real advantages for the environment?

Nowadays, many labels and certification mechanisms are available on the European market to prove that the energy produced or consumed is in some way “green”, i.e. environmentally friendly. Green power labels assist consumers to verify the ecological performance of green products and national labelling programmes (e.g. OK-Power, Grüner Storm-Label and TÜV Süd in Germany) are therefore important and powerful instruments for strengthening consumer confidence in the voluntary green electricity market, but how many consumers (environmental professionals included) can really tell the difference between these and make an informed choice? What is the best way to spend money for buying energy and at the same time help the environment?

European research projects have already been developed in the past years for analysing the situation and address some of these issues, e.g. the CLEAN-E project². The minimum standard for green electricity labelling schemes set up by the non-profit organisation Eugene (European Green Electricity Network) served as the major point of orientation throughout the project.

In the UK quite a lot of work has been done on these issues by OFGEM, by the Energy Saving Trust and by the National Consumer Council, defining guidelines³, a “Green Claims Code”, a classification of green offers, etc.

Proposal

An EFAEP working group could elaborate a comparison among different approaches adopted by the major energy suppliers in several countries, trying to highlight best practices and elaborate a final document with recommendations for consumers and/or for the Commission.

Practical proposal for a 4-steps activity:

- a) an EFAEP working group defines the “axis” or components of the analysis to be performed and design a web form to gather information from individuals;
- b) individual environmental professionals contribute to an extensive analysis of the environmental behaviour of their energy suppliers, by filling a form on the EFAEP website;
- c) member associations aggregate such contributions in order to elaborate a picture at each national level (e.g. AIAT, AIN and AISA work together to build the Italian picture) the approaches used by the main suppliers;
- d) the EFAEP working group elaborates final document with recommendations.

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²http://www.oeko.de/research_consultancy/projects/concluded_projects/dok/669.php?id=&anzeige=det&Titel1=&IAutor1=&ISchlagw1=&sortieren=&dokid=500

³ <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/Media/PressRel/Documents1/040209ofgem8.pdf>

6. INNOVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

It is suggested that EFAEP start a group on Innovation and Environment. The main reasons are that environmental innovations in the broad sense of technological and socio-technical changes should remain high on the political agenda in the period of economic crisis and that this theme is suitable to link up the environmental professionals in businesses and policy-making with academics.

The main goal for the next few years could be:

- Maintain/increase environmental R&D and Schooling levels across Europe taking into consideration big, possibly even enlarging, differences between the EU countries.
- Maintain/strengthen the position of environmental innovations in businesses and academia through knowledge exchange within Europe and international co-operation.

The main activities could be:

- Cross-thematic publications/workshops/conferences on the innovations and environment, linked with other organisations, EIT, European Universities Association, etc. It can be, for example, "learning", "clusters", "incubators", "patents", "policy" and so on. This is primarily EU-policy oriented (lobby). The suggestion is to draw attention to Environmental Innovations as a new way to overcome crisis.
- Thematic publications/workshops/conferences on emerging issues that get little attention, or that lack good solutions, for example link spatial policy and innovations with biodiversity, link early warning systems with R&D, scaling up of social experiments in sustainability. This is co-operation oriented. For example, develop an international network of businesses, policy-makers and researchers on localised development (distributed economy), and/or on "living in depression", which means sustained in the densely populated delta regions.

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7. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Citation of European Commission website, Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry: "Resource efficiency, recycling, substitution and the increased use of secondary raw materials should be promoted in view of easing the critical dependence on primary raw materials, reduce import dependency, and improve the environmental balance, as well as meeting industrial needs." EU industry increasingly relies on secondary raw materials, which contribute to the security of supply and energy efficiency. Unfortunately, too many end-of-life products leave the EU and do not end up in sound recycling channels. Keeping that in mind it may be useful to compare the situation of selected industry branches in different EU member states thus providing an input to the Action Plan for the Lead Market Initiative of EU (lead markets: e-health, sustainable construction, protective textiles, bio-based products, recycling, renewable energies). The basis for a comparative analysis can partially be provided by VDI-guidelines (VDI-Richtlinien) which either have already been published or are still under construction.

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8. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The group intends to focus their investigation on sustainable development along 2 main directives:

a. TERRITORIAL APPLICATION OF MONITORING PLANS AND PROGRAMS SUSTAINABILITY 'AND USE OF INDICES AND INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABILITY'

Monitoring of territory on the adoption of plans and programs for sustainability at the local level, with particularly reference to indices and indicators used in various fields environmental, territorial and local man-made, and with a particular attention to economic indicators.

This will be achieved through the construction by the AISA a dedicated GIS relational database of fast compilation by user, in access, which will then be distributed and corrected by other members EFAEP group. Then in each state the database will be implemented with the available data. Finals will be the comparison of data collection and processing of results on the monitoring dissemination and implementation of sustainability plans, programs and projects.

b. DEFINITION OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE SCIENCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Define a conceptual model of the science of sustainability now being defined.

A sort of guidelines that allow highlight what are the minimum elements to develop a sustainability assessment, which consists not only of indicators and environmental indices, but compare them with aspects of current patterns of production and consumption, and the possible scenarios related to population, production and future consumption.

Topic of discussion should be:

- The meaning of the current context sustainable historical-cultural and socio-economic (how does the environmental scientist in this debate, what are the elements which it priority and what the consequences).
- The assessment tools and developing new proposals.
- The main tool of evaluation of sustainability are now often useful for evaluations of the maximum to a very large scale (for example, the important role as a communication tool indicator such as the ecological footprint - if you want to date immature refine the assessment and achieve a local scale, and the establishment as a system of decision support and guidance of planning) or related instruments (such as the Life Cycle assessment) for which many more aspects of the assessment impacts require a specific depth.

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