



EDITORIAL by Katharina Helming, Katharina Diehl, Aranka Podhora (Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research) and Klaus Jacob (Freie Universität Berlin).

Over the past couple of years Member States and stakeholders have been disputing if and how the European Union should contribute to the conservation of soils. In 2006, following a comprehensive stakeholder consultation, the European Commission tabled their thematic strategy for soil protection, including a proposal for a soil framework directive. However, this proposal has not been adopted because a qualified minority of EU member states opposed it with the arguments of excessive administrative burden and alleged violation of the subsidiarity principles. In February 2012, the European Commission published a report on the implementation of the soil thematic strategy (COM(2012)46final) and ongoing activities, namely awareness raising, research, policy integration and legislation. The report argues that despite considerable efforts in awareness raising, research and integration, the state of soil degradation is still alarming. However, safeguarding soil functionalities at European level is a necessary precondition for meeting upcoming grand societal challenges, particularly food security and sustainable agriculture; energy security; climate action and resource efficiency.

This is the background on which LAIASE researchers in Work Package 2 ("Science for IA tools and procedures") invited experts from soil sciences to a workshop in JRC, Ispra, which was held on 24-25 April, 2012. The purpose of the workshop was to present the LAIASE approach and in particular the LAIASE Toolbox to a wider scientific community and to discuss research questions which should be addressed in the future. The workshop was attended by 18 experts from eight European countries, bringing complementary expertise on soil sciences and related policy support.

The initiative was hosted and supported by JRC staff, namely Luca Montarella. JRC would be interested in receiving support from the scientific community on a revised impact assessment for a European directive. As a first step, the LAIASE team, together with the attending scientist, will make a detailed review of the 2006 Impact Assessments. The review will evaluate if new tools and knowledge have been developed since then which could address questions which had to be left open in the earlier assessment.

LAIASE News

• [LAIASE Annual Meeting 2012](#)

The main objective of the LAIASE Network of Excellence is to build up a broad interdisciplinary community of researchers and practitioners which develops a mutual understanding of the respective needs and potentials. LAIASE held its 3rd Annual Meeting in Bilbao, hosted by TECNALIA, from 14-16 March, 2012. Recurrent elements in the Annual Meetings are the consolidation of the LAIASE Network by enhancing information exchanges and updates on achievements in the previous year and strengthening the internal relations. A major new element in the Annual Meeting in Bilbao was the outreach to external groups/projects that are relevant to LAIASE objective to build a community of IA researchers and practitioners that will continue beyond the period of project funding. In particular, the Open Day on 14 March was used to present LAIASE and discuss opportunities for linking-up with external parties, projects and developments with invited external experts, covering fields of IA expertise that are not included in the LAIASE Consortium.

• [European Climate Adaptation Platform 'CLIMATE-ADAPT'](#)

On 23 March, 2012 the European Climate Adaptation Platform (CLIMATE-ADAPT) was launched by the European Commission. The platform is developed for the European Commission by a consortium led by Alterra. It supports the development of the knowledge base required for policy development on climate adaptation on the European, (trans)national, regional and local levels. It supports policy makers and other stakeholders in decision making on climate adaptation. CLIMATE-ADAPT focusses among others on learning from practice and provides a number of interactive tools to support this.

• [LAIASE Session on "Does Evidence Help to Promote Transparency and Accountability?" at the 2012 Earth System Governance Conference](#)

LAIASE organised a panel at this year's Earth System Governance Conference, which was held from 18-20 April in Lund, Sweden under the heading "Towards a Just and Legitimate Earth System Governance - Addressing Inequalities". The LAIASE panel titled "Does evidence help to promote transparency and accountability?" addressed recent trends towards evidence-based policy making regarding its contribution to transparency and accountability. It discussed the role of evidence in decision making as compared to power, interests and other political factors.

• [LAIASE Presentation at UNECE Task Force Meeting on Integrated Assessment Modelling](#)

The Task Force on Integrated Assessment Modelling under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution holds its 41st Meeting in Bilthoven/NL from 7-9 May, 2012. Stefan Reis (CEH) is presenting an overview of LAIASE, with a focus on the toolbox development.

• [Resource Policy in Germany](#)

LAIASE partner FUB leads a consortium in a 3 year's project on "resource policy", commissioned by the Federal Environmental Agency. A consortium with six renowned partners was formed: Ecologic Institute, European School of Governance, Institute of Economic Structures Research, Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IOW), Oko-Institut und Wuppertal-Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. In the course of the project, several impact assessments will be conducted.

• [2011 Lasswell Prize for Researchers in the Tyndall Centre](#)

Researchers in the Tyndall Centre - a partner in the LAIASE Consortium - have been awarded the 2011 Harold D. Lasswell Prize for their analysis of the little studied but politically vital practices of climate policy evaluation in Europe.

• [Researching Impact Assessment Methodology for Ecosystem Services](#)

LAIASE partner CEH leads a consortium of academics and stakeholders looking at uncertainty and scale estimation within ecosystem services assessment tools. The team will be assessing tools to value the full impact of forestry expansion as measured by the suite of ecosystem services delivered by two sites with contrasting management policies in the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland.

Publications from the LAIASE network

• [Policy Assessment: The State of the Art](#)

LAIASE researchers Camilla Adelle, University of East Anglia, and Sabine Weiland, Freie Universität Berlin, published an article on "Policy Assessment: the state of the art" in "Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal". It is part of a special issue on the state of the art of impact assessment that contains six papers, covering Environmental Impact Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Policy Assessment, Social Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, and Sustainability Assessment. The contributions provide a comprehensive and insightful overview of the current state of these fields of practice, and point to some interesting and challenging directions for the future.

• [LAIASE Working Paper No.3: Approaching Rio+20 - A Survey of Positions and Expectations of Civil Society Organisations in Six European Countries on the Green Economy](#)

This report presents findings from an online survey and a number of expert interviews on the perspectives of European civil society on Sustainable Development and the Green Economy in the run-up to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The survey was sent out to civil society organisations in six selected European countries to gain a better understanding of their views on specific aspects of the Green Economy concept.

• [Navigating the Earth's Governance System](#)

A more effective environmental governance system needs to be instituted soon, according to an article published in the journal Science. Researchers in the Tyndall Centre,

Professor Andrew Jordan amongst others, have contributed to the piece, which is a key contribution of the science community to the June 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("Rio+20"). The article argues that reducing the risk of potential global environmental disaster requires a "constitutional moment". It calls for a UN Sustainable Development Council to better integrate sustainable development concerns across the UN system, an upgrading of the UN Environment Programme to a full-fledged UN agency and stronger consultative rights for representatives of civil society in global governance.

- **[FEEM Launches New E-journal: "Review of Environment, Energy and Economics" - Re3](#)**

Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) announces the launch of its "Review of Environment, Energy and Economics" (Re3) e-journal. The "Review of Environment, Energy and Economics" is a new tool for the dissemination of the work and research-based policy analysis of researchers and leading international scholars, covering the areas of the environment, energy and economics, and offering new insights into the challenges ahead. Re3 collects both invited contributions and unsolicited submissions, and readers will have the opportunity to comment the posts.

- **[Governing Renewable Energy in the EU: Confronting a Governance Dilemma](#)**

In this paper Andrew Jordan et al. are elaborating on the challenges and governance dilemmas EU governors face when trying to balance multiple objectives and conflicting interests between policy areas and Member States in order to achieve a deeper integration of European energy policy.

- **[European Union agricultural policy scenarios' impacts on social sustainability of agricultural holdings](#)**

This paper aims to assess the impacts of household behaviour on social sustainability by simulating agricultural policy scenarios of the European Union (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). For this purpose a multicriteria model was formulated, at farm household level, in order to study the social impacts of the CAPs using different scenarios.



Events

- **[4th Halle Workshop on Efficiency and Productivity Analysis - Issues in Dynamic Efficiency Analysis \(HAWEPA\)](#)**

The 4th Halle Workshop on Efficiency and Productivity Analysis will take place at the IAMO from 16-17 July, 2012. This year's workshop is about 'Issues in Dynamic Efficiency Analysis' with a focus on developments in research about productivity and efficiency measurement. Papers on the theory of productivity and efficiency measurement as well as on all fields of empirical application, including agriculture, regulation, health economics, production, environmental economics, government and industry are welcome.

- **[14th Annual BIOECON Conference, Resource Economics, Biodiversity Conservation and Development](#)**

The 14th Annual International BIOECON conference on "Resource Economics, Biodiversity Conservation and Development" will be held in Cambridge, England on 18-20 September 2012. The conference takes a broad interest in the area of resources, development and conservation. It will be of interest to both researchers and policy makers working on biodiversity policy, especially natural resources in developing countries.

- **[10th EES Biennial Conference](#)**

The Tenth Biennial Conference of the European Evaluation Society will be held 3-5 October, 2012, in Helsinki, Finland. Its topic is "Evaluation in the Networked Society: New Concepts, New Challenges, New Solutions". Confirmed keynote speakers are Eleanor Chelimsky, Tarja Cronberg, and Robert Kirkpatrick.

- **[2nd International Conference on Sustainable Remediation](#)**

The 2nd Sustainable Remediation Conference held from 14-16 November, 2012 in Vienna, Austria covers a broad range of topics concerning the remediation of contaminated sites with a lower environmental footprint, such as policy, conceptual frameworks and societal values for integrating sustainability in decision-making, metrics and indicators, or practical tools for sustainability, among others.

- **[Workshop "Responsible Supply Chains and Networks: Challenges for Governance and Sustainability"](#)**

The workshop 'Responsible Supply Chains and Networks: Challenges for Governance and Sustainability' aims to discuss current and develop new research on challenges for governance and sustainability, as well as environmental risks arising with global supply chains and networks. The workshop will take place in Stockholm, Sweden from 22-24 November, 2012.

- **[Advancing the Research and Policy Agendas on Sustainable Energy and the Environment](#)**

The objective of the conference, to be held on 22-23 November, 2012 in Oslo, Norway, is to advance research and policy agendas on sustainable energy and the environment. Themes and issues of the conference to be addressed are: 1. Transforming Practices: How could a transformation of practices in terms of a lower energy use and lower environmental impacts can be achieved? 2. Implementing Technologies: What are the scientific, political, economic, environmental and societal challenges associated with the implementation of sustainable energy technologies? 3. Stimulating Natural and Social Science Interaction on Innovative Policy: What characterizes successful interdisciplinary cooperation between natural scientists and social scientists?



Policies

- **[2011 Monitoring Report of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy](#)**

Eurostat has published the fourth report that monitors the implementation of the 2006 EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS). It assesses progress towards sustainable development by comparing an evaluation of eleven headline indicators (such as resource productivity and the abundance of common birds) with that of the previous 2009 report.

- **[Green Legislation Can Be Good for Better Regulation](#)**

A report presented to the Commission by the High-Level Group on Administrative Burdens has found that many examples of smarter, less burdensome are from the environment sector. They suggest that this might be because environmental regulation can be seen as particularly burdensome for business. However, the report shows that the administrative burden they caused compared with other laws is much lower than is generally assumed.

- **[OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050: The Consequences of Inaction](#)**

The OECD has published an "Environmental Outlook to 2050: The Consequences of Inaction". The report urges countries as they struggle with immediate challenges of stretched public finances and high unemployment that they must not neglect the longer term. Action needs to be taken now to prevent irreversible damage to the environment.

- **["Planet Under Pressure" Conference Declaration](#)**

The Planet Under Pressure Conference with its 3,000 participants is the world's largest gathering of experts on global environmental and social issues. The Co-Chairs of the Planet Under Pressure Conference 2012, Dr Lidia Brito and Dr Mark Stafford Smith, have issued their State of the Planet Declaration, reflecting the key messages emerging from the conference. It is supported by statements from the Board of Patrons, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, and Youth Representatives. The declaration is to be seen in context of the UN Summit Rio+20 in June 2012.

- **[Green Week 2012: 'Every Drop Counts - The Water Challenge'](#)**

The Green Week is the biggest annual conference on European environment policy taking place from 22-25 May in Brussels. The topic of this year's event is the 'Water Challenge'. In more than 40 sessions, it will be elaborated on how this precious resource can be used properly and sparingly, how we are able to make sure that we have enough water for all of its uses, and how we could avoid to pollute and overexploite our rivers, seas and oceans.



Training

- **[Free Online Training Courses at EIA Campus](#)**

Online training courses at EIA Campus are available free of charge to past and current IAIA (Internationale Association for Impact Assessment) members from developing countries and countries in transition. When signing up for a series, interested scholars are able to access any or all of the courses in that series. The series available include, among others: Cumulative Effects Assessment Series, EIA Process, Adaptive Management and Climate Change.

- **[CASTLE - Careers in Sustainability Excellence](#)**

This is the proposal for an Initial Training Network under the Marie-Curie Programme that was invited for contract negotiations on 8 May. Co-ordinated by the European Forestry Institute (EFI) in Finland, CASTLE will offer 14 young researchers a comprehensive training in sustainability science methods, including sustainability impact assessment, particularly for the bioenergy sectors. CASTLE offers the potential to reinforce and extend the network of the IA research community with focus on early career researchers.

- **[ICTA UAB 3rd Summer School: Environmental Conflicts](#)**

This Summer School for masters and doctoral students examines the global movement for environmental justice and focuses on socio-environmental conflicts at different

scales and in different forms. The course is based on lectures and discussions and will also use videos and other materials prepared by ICTA/UAB researchers on their own research. The Summer School will be held in Barcelona, Spain, from 2-11 July, 2012.

- **Workshop 'Uncertainty in Climate Change Research: An Integrated Approach'**

The workshop 'Uncertainty in Climate Change Research: An Integrated Approach' is designed for young academics with a strong interest in the integrated uncertainty problem in particular with respect of climate change research. The workshop will take place from 8-17 August, 2012, at the NACR in Boulder, Colorado.

- **ESF Junior Summit "Water: Unite and Divide"**

The European Science Foundation (ESF) offers, on a competitive basis, full-cost awards to leading early career scholars to participate in the first ESF Junior Summit "Water: Unite and Divide. Interdisciplinary approaches for a sustainable future". Young scientists across the academic spectrum are invited to participate in a four-day, in-depth discussion of the challenges and opportunities posed by inter (multi, trans) disciplinary research. The Summit will be held on 29-30 August, 2012, in Stresa, Italy.

- **Belpasso International Summer School on Environmental Economics "Sustainable Development: Theory and Measurement Methods"**

The 2012 Summer School, to be held in Belpasso, Italy on 2-8 September, 2012, focuses on "Sustainable Development: Theory and Measurement Methods". So far, no agreement on the definition and quantitative assessment of sustainability has been reached on a worldwide basis. The main aim of the summer school is to provide young scholars with the most appropriate theoretical and methodological background and to enable them to make a valuable contribution to the post Rio+20 scientific debate.

Links

- **EUROPP - European Politics and Policy**

The London School of Economics is launching a brand new, multi-disciplinary and multi-author blog called "EUROPP - European Politics and Policy". The blog begins operating on 29 February, 2012, and is designed to expand the interchange between LSE researchers and colleagues across Europe and beyond. The fundamental mission is to help build public understanding of the social sciences in the context of European politics and governance. The focus lies on presenting evidence-based arguments and debates in the most accessible way without compromising on the integrity of arguments or reasoning. There is no editorial line apart from these commitments.

- **Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) - Survey**

The Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) is a comprehensive analytic tool offering stakeholders in the green economy a robust system to track, analyze and improve upon both the perceptions and performance of national green economies. National and city governments increasingly look to products like the GGEI to track and benchmark their reputation and performance in the growing green economy.

Jobs & Funding

Please visit our website for opportunities in the field of Impact Assessment and Sustainable Development. You are invited to send your vacancies, research programs, events or other relevant content to liaise@feem.it



LIAISE - *Linking Impact Assessment Instruments to Sustainability Expertise* has received funding under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) THEME 6 Environment (including Climate Change). Grant agreement n. 243826.

