LIAISE

Linking
Impact
Assessment
Instruments to
Sustainability
Expertise

Discussion Paper

A Summary of User Needs and Expectations with Regards to Impact Assessment

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Executive Summary

This Deliverable reports on the most comprehensive survey yet conducted of user needs and expectations with regard to Impact Assessment (IA) systems and tools in 17 European countries. Data was collected through documentary analysis and interviews with c. 130 people who steer IA at a strategic level. Previous surveys of this kind have been either narrower in focus (e.g. Hertin et al 2006) or conducted in less depth (e.g. EVIA 2008). None have focused on the experience and insights of those people at national level who determine the strategic direction of IA.

Its finds a wide variety in the IA systems studied. The systems themselves, their underlying purposes and the tools they use vary both within and between the 17 countries. Many different factors affect the way they are structured and their functioning. These include the availability of resources (skills, time and data with which to conduct an IA) as well as the steps that have been taken to establish of quality control mechanisms and institutions. Although many countries have sought to learn from one another and international bodies such as the OECD, there is still no one dominant approach to undertaking IA that is firmly institutionalised in all countries. Rather, each country employs IA in a distinctive way which fits its prevailing political and policy context. It is important therefore not to 'de-contextualise' IA, especially when seeking to define and extend 'best practices' or increase the use of IA tools, such as cost benefit analysis, scenarios or formal computer-based models.

Many - but by no means all – of the 17 IA systems already harness the analytical power of IA tools to inform their assessment activities. In fact, only 10 of the 17 actively promote their use via the production of guidance to the officials undertaking IAs. On the whole, the use of IA tools in practice is highly differentiated both between the main tool types (simpler tools tend to be more popular than more sophisticated ones) and amongst individual IA systems (tool use is generally higher amongst the older Member States than the newer ones). To summarise, the widespread institutionalisation of IA has not yet led to a concomitant institutionalisation of IA tool use. Indeed, many of the countries studied still appear unconvinced of the basic need to increase tool use across the board.

Of those countries which have grappled with the challenge of how to increase IA tool use, some have done more actively and firmly than others. But even amongst the most enthusiastic advocates, IA tools are not really seen as 'silver bullet' to improve the quality of IA (however defined) and, in turn, produce 'better' policy decisions.

In general, user needs with respect to IA tools defy simple generalisations. They tend to be specific to particular tools and/or IA systems. Instead of 'saturating' them with information on tools, this pattern of use calls for a more targeted and 'smarter' deployment of existing as well as improved tools; one which is sensitive to the prevailing context in each country. For the least enthusiastic adopters, it may be 'smarter' to focus on making the case for IA tools, whereas more enthusiastic adopters seem to want more detailed

information on specific (types of) tools. Test cases constitute a potentially important method to understand these contextual conditions (and thus couple supply to demand), a task which will eventually be addressed in WP 6. At the same time, LIAISE should devote resources to understanding the other assessment venues in which IA tools are, or could in the future, be used.

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D1.3* A Summary of User Needs and Expectations with Regard to Impact Assessment

*This is the Final Deliverable submitted in month 24 of the project. An Interim Deliverable was submitted in month 12. This final version is based on a complete and consolidated set of data from the 17 country cases. It is also informed by further discussion of the findings and their implications within the WP1 team and the wider LIAISE NoE.

1. Introduction

Background

Policy level appraisal or Impact Assessment (IA) is widely seen as a key mechanism to improve the quality of regulation and to integrate different policy objectives (Jacob et al 2008). Over the last decade, IA has experienced an enormous global expansion and is now practiced in 26 of the 30 OECD member countries (OECD 2008). Within the European Union (EU) it arrived on the political agenda of the member states (as well as the European Commission) in the late 1990s. Nowadays, it is regarded as the cornerstone of programmes for better regulation (Radaelli 2005).

However, the widespread diffusion of IA has not necessarily produced a convergence in IA practices (*ibid*). The academic research accompanying the rise of IA in the policy world has shown that there is a wide variety of IA systems, with different institutional set-ups, objectives and cultures (e.g. Jacob et al 2008). Consequently, there is no 'one way' of conducting IA, or even one 'best way'. Understanding the practice and principles of IA requires a full consideration of these differences. This is equally true when considering the use of IA tools in the IA process.

The remarkable growth in IA and the growing availability of different policy assessment tools has increased the need for a greater understanding of what affects their supply and the demand for them amongst policy makers. But while there has been a strengthening of political commitment to improve the evidence base of policy making via formalized *ex ante* policy assessment, research has already show that the use of specific tools such as Cost Benefit Analysis or modelling is rather variable. The EVIA project demonstrated that the tools used (and how well they are used) differs widely between jurisdictions (EVIA 2008). Nilsson et al (2008) found that even when tools are embedded in a formal policy assessment system such as IA, their use is differentiated and often very limited, in particular when it comes to more advanced tools. So-called 'simple' tools appear to appeal more strongly to the everyday needs of policy makers than some of the more advanced and complex tools (Hertin et al 2006). Lack of time, data, resources and skills are all factors which are thought to constrain the use of more advanced tools (ibid).

It appears, therefore, that the institutionalisation of IA has not led to a concomitant institutionalisation of IA tool use. However, the overall picture of tool (non) use has not yet been fully explored. In particular, more information is need on users' perspective - that is the perspective of those officials and other actors that are expected to develop, steer, evaluate and/or undertake IA.

This Deliverable reports on the most comprehensive survey thus far of user needs and expectations with regard to IA tool use. It focuses on those involved with IA in their country at a strategic level (i.e. those people who champion, oversee, guide, audit or write guidance for IA processes rather than officials who carry out IA). Previous surveys of this kind have been either narrower in focus (e.g. Hertin et al 2006) or in less depth (e.g. EVIA 2008). None have focused on the experience and insights of those people involved in steering IA at a strategic level.

Aim and Objectives

LIAISE attempts to bridge the gap between researchers and IA practitioners, especially with regard to IA tools.

Work Package One (WP1) contributes to this overall goal by gathering perspectives from the user side of IA to ascertain the conditions in which IA is taking place and users' needs and expectations with regards to IA processes and IA tools. The information gathered informs: the 'test cases' (WP6); the improvement of tools (WP3); and the identification of new knowledge needs in IA (WP2). In addition, through its activities, WP1 aims to attract the attention of the research community beyond the partners of the consortium (WP7).

Deliverable D1.3 forms a central part of WP1 by building both a broad and, at the same time, in depth account of user needs and expectations regarding IA processes, IA tools, IA training and Work Package 6 test cases. In doing so, D1.3 aims to supplement and complement the existing literature (covered in D1.1 and D1.2) on user needs.

The next section of this deliverable briefly outlines the methodology used to survey user needs and expectations while section 3 then sets out the findings. These results are presented in three sub-sections: 3.1 The Purpose and Context of Impact Assessment; 3.2, The Quality of Impact Assessment; and 3.3, Impact Assessment Tools. Discussion on IA processes (as well as best practice) can be found in 3.1 and 3.2; discussion of IA tools falls within 3.3; and IA training is raised where relevant in all three sub-sections. Where particular findings are relevant to test cases (and other Work Packages) these are also raised throughout Section 3. Section 4 offers some preliminary conclusions and highlights the implications for the different Work Packages. Annex I and Annex II give details on how the information was collected while Annex III presents the full and aggregated results of the interviews. Annex IV gives the results of more detailed documentary research which coded tool use in published IA reports in a number of countries.

2. Methodology

This deliverable reports on a number of country case studies. The 17 country cases were selected by the Work Package 1 team on the basis of several criteria, including that an IA system (either explicitly or implicitly) was in place, that a representative sample of different parts of the EU were included, and practical considerations such as utilising the research team's existing contacts and language skills. The cases selected were: Netherlands; Belgium; Germany; Switzerland; Greece; Cyprus; Denmark; Estonia; Lithuania; Finland; Sweden; Spain; Italy; UK; Ireland; Poland and Czech Republic.

Three approaches were used to gather data. First a desk-based analysis of relevant IA literature and documents (IA reports, draft and final legal texts, policy documents by the ministry and relevant publications by external stakeholders) provided a broad picture of how IA is conducted in each country. This information was compiled in a standardised template or fiche (See Annex I) which focused on several aspects of the IA systems, including: the design and use of the IA system, the quality of IA, its role in the policy making process and issues surrounding tool use.

Second, a series of 5-10 interviews were conducted in each country with those people who at a strategic level champion, oversee, guide, audit or write guidance for IA processes. A total of 129 interviews were conducted. A set of standardised questions was used to conduct these interviews (see Annex II). The views of these individuals have not been analysed until now. The existing literature (identified in D1.1 and D1.2), focuses mainly on the needs of 'desk officials' whose job it is to perform IAs.

Third, more in-depth, document analysis of tool use was carried out on 325 individual IAs within eight jurisdictions where published IAs are reasonably easily accessible. While information available within published IAs is often rather limited, this is a first step towards understanding the relationship between patterns of tool use and the deeper motivations for carrying out IA. For each IA in each jurisdiction, where tool use was reported, this was categorised into one of five groups: Simple tools, Monetary Assessment tools, Physical Assessment, Modelling and Other (which included stakeholder analysis and multi-criteria analysis). Preliminary results are reported in the 'Impact Assessment Tools' sub-section below, and in Annex IV.

3. Results

The Purpose and Context of Impact Assessment

IA systems are in place or are being developed in all of the 17 countries examined. However, they vary in many (if not all) aspects of their history, form and function as well as the context in which they operate. While many countries have had an IA system of some form for many years (e.g. UK, Spain, Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands), other countries have only

recently established an IA system (e.g. Ireland, Greece, Cyprus) and some countries are still developing theirs. In countries where IA is more established, it is evident that IA systems are dynamic and change over time with reforms being implemented every few years to improve the quality of IAs and to keep up with changes in the policy making world.

The main purpose of IA is not always made explicit in the underlying documents of the IA systems. In addition, an IA system can have more than one purpose and the opinion on what the main purpose of IA is can differ between actors. However, reducing costs imposed by regulation is the most important driver for the introduction of IA across the majority of countries (e.g. UK; Cyprus; Poland; Belgium). The implementation of IA in other jurisdictions (such as the lead given by the European Commission) appears to also be a factor for the introduction of some of the newer IA systems (e.g. Ireland; Greece; Poland). While sustainable development or the environment is mentioned in the IA Guidance in a number of countries (e.g. UK; Netherlands; Finland), this is seldom the main purpose of IA – only 6.8 per cent of responses to the interview question 'what is the purpose of IA in your country' indicated that sustainable development was a factor (see Figure 1, Annex III). This aspect of IA is not well implemented compared to economic aspects.

The political and institutional context is important when examining IA systems as the existing policy making process can have a strong influence on how IA is interpreted and practiced. For example, in countries such as Switzerland where consultation is deep rooted it can be difficult for actors to see where IA fits in with the existing process of law making. However, while context is important, the system of IA is not determined by the context. IA is very versatile and it is evident that different political contexts are having a distorting effect on IA in Europe which, can be seen in so many different forms. This shows that there will be no one set of guidance or tools that will work across all countries or IA systems. Therefore it is important to better understand the different purposes of IA in different countries as well as the relationship between IA and the political and institutional context in which it takes place.

Key messages for the LIAISE NoE: *IA systems differ widely between countries. They can also vary over time i.e. IA systems are dynamic. In some countries IA is still in a very formative stage (e.g. Estonia) and these countries represent an opportunity for researchers to influence the early development of the systems. While sustainable development or the environment is mentioned in the IA Guidance in a number of countries (e.g. UK; Netherlands; Finland), this is seldom the main purpose of IA. Many countries may continue overhauling or tweaking their systems. The different purposes of IA could have a significant impact on all aspects of the IA system including the types of tools that are used. For example, more deliberative tools may be needed in an IA system which places emphasis on transparency and information exchange while a Standard Cost Model may be preferred if reducing administrative burdens is the main purpose.*

The Quality of Impact Assessment

A substantial proportion of the interviewees thought that the quality of IAs in their jurisdictions was still poor, although improving over time (see Figure 2 and 3, Annex III). Some countries have established mechanisms to ensure the adequacy and the quality of IAs. Most countries have coordination units that provide guidance and coordination. However, formal quality control of the IA reports is established in only a few countries. Denmark, Finland, Cyprus and Greece have no central quality control of IAs. Increased quality control was one of the commonly suggested options to improve the quality of IA by interviewees (see Figure 7, Annex III). The quality control mechanisms in place in other countries vary in their level of scrutiny. For example an IA unit in the Prime Minister's office in Ireland attempts to review all IAs for primary legislation but does not look at IAs for secondary legislation. In the UK an external 'Regulatory Policy Committee' was set up at the end of 2009 to review all IAs as they are produced. This Committee is in addition to the Better Regulation Executive which acts as the coordinator of IA in the UK and writes the IA Guidance. Hence the committee acts as an external scrutiny body in a manner which is similar to the Impact Assessment Board in the European Commission. However, such external scrutiny bodies are not (yet) widespread. In countries where there is little central quality control (e.g. Finland) it is not clear who is responsible for overseeing the IA system. Quality is left to the individual departments or even the policy officer in charge of the IA. Without proper scrutiny there is little incentive to invest time and resources into IA. Wider external pressure from politicians, central government or stakeholders to improve quality is also seen as a factor in some countries. This requires that the IA reports are easily accessible on the internet. Some countries (e.g. Ireland) have had independent and comprehensive reviews of IAs and the IA system which have contributed significantly to improving the quality of IAs but such mechanisms are relatively rare in other countries.

Various factors are important in determining the quality of IAs. These include: the timing of the IA (i.e. is it done early, or late in the policy making process); the level of political support for IA; the motivation of officials to conduct IAs; the level of skills (especially quantitative ones); the scope of the IAs (i.e. does it focus on the full range of impacts). Political context can also be an important factor in the quality of IA and what is perceived as 'quality'.

There is a question of "quality for whom?" (Radaelli 2003) Quality from the perspective of tool developers? Or quality from the perspective of policy officials, or of democracy more generally? If there are no formal criteria for quality, which ones do countries apply? The Guidance documents are often used as a basis for developing the criteria but the weight given to various aspects can vary significantly depending on the stated purpose of IA. What is perceived as quality can also vary significantly between actors within a country as they will place different emphasis on different aspects/purposes of IA. While many countries discuss sustainable development in their Guidance documents and policy pronouncements, they do not necessarily place much weight on this when evaluating the quality of IA. This has important implications for how much consideration is given to sustainable

development issues in the IA process. Standardisation of tools (e.g. Cost Benefit Analysis) can be seen as a way of helping to maintain and evaluate the quality.

Key messages for the LIAISE NoE*: What 'quality' is (and what might therefore constitute 'best practice') varies according to the context and purpose of the IA system as well as the perspective of the evaluator. Many factors affect quality of IAs such as resources, skills, motivation and the perceived influence of IA in decision-making.*

Impact Assessment Tools

The Pattern of Tool Use

The main tools used in IA across the different countries are simple tools such as checklists and questionnaires, Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) and administrative burden Assessments such as Cost-Effectiveness Analysis and the Standard Cost Model (SCM). Examples of other tools which are advocated and/or used less frequently include scenarios, Multi-Criteria Analysis, and computer models. The majority of the Guidance documents at least mention tools and some Guidance documents give in-depth instructions (e.g. the UK) and/or worked examples (e.g. Ireland). The Guidance documents in some countries act as simple tools themselves if they contain a number of checklists or are in the form of a questionnaire (e.g. Cyprus). Only a few countries do not advocate which tools should be used at all (e.g. Sweden; Switzerland). However, tool use is flexible in other countries (e.g. Italy; Denmark). Which tools are used therefore varies across and within countries with different departments favouring different tools. Ten countries promote tools in their guidance to policy makers (Belgium; Spain; Czech Republic; Estonia; Poland; Netherlands; UK; Ireland; Switzerland; Finland). Seven countries engage in little or no apparent IA tool promotion (Greece; Italy; Cyprus; Denmark; Germany, Lithuania and Sweden).

In some countries, ministries are encouraged to develop tools for other ministries to apply. However, in other countries tool use is highly prescribed (e.g. the UK) and there is very little flexibility in which tools to apply or how to apply them. A number of countries also favour economic analysis (e.g. UK; Italy; Czech Republic; Netherlands; Belgium; Poland). This type of analysis can often be alongside the use of simpler tools such as check lists and impact matrices with the results of these feeding into the CBA. Qualitative methods such as Multi-Criteria Analysis are only advocated in a few countries (e.g. Ireland). This is despite the fact that qualitative analysis is commonplace in IAs. In practice quantification is less common than the guidelines would suggest and when it is done it is often incomplete or inadequate. This contributes to the mistrust felt by many policy officials towards quantitative tools like CBA. Tools can also be used in analysis preceding or in parallel with the IA, with the results feeding into the analysis later on. These tools are often used by consultants in commissioned reports, which require resources as the tools can be quite complex such as Life Cycle Analysis and Material Flow Models.

The more detailed document analysis of of 325 individual IAs in eight jurisdictions illustrate how tools are actually used. Annex IV contains graphical representation of three of these jurisdictions as illustrations. In the European Commission (Figure 14, Annex IV), more than 40 of the 50 cases used simple tools, and other tools such as MCA and stakeholder analysis are also prominent. The UK, by contrast (Figure 15, Annex IV), shows greater use of monetary assessment and simple tools, both of which are mandatory in the IA guidelines. There are only a few cases which mention modelling tools, and these are mainly economic models used in policy areas such as transport and pensions. Ireland (Figure 16, Annex IV) represents a different type of jurisdiction with a much thinner reported pattern of tool use, with many more cases using no tools. Denmark shows mainly use of monetary assessment and simple tools with some quantification, and again only a few cases mentioning modelling tools and/or physical assessment – mainly environment and tax policy. A significant minority of cases used no tools. Poland shows a similar pattern to Denmark. In the cases of Greece and Finland, more than half the IAs sampled used no tools, and no tools were evident at all in the reports from Cyprus.

Key messages for the LIAISE NoE: *Tool use can be tightly standardised in some countries while in others it is more flexible both in terms of which tools to apply and how to apply them. In many interviews it was hard for the IA experts to think of IA in terms of tools as they could not extract the concept of tools from that of IA as a whole. Examining a large number of IA cases, many jurisdictions do not report much use of sophisticated tools. While this may be down to focusing solely on written IA reports, it will be instructive to carry out further research on whether more advanced tools are used and not reported, and the conditions under which advanced tools are more likely to be used in IA and related policy venues.*

Improving Impact Assessment Tool Use

There is an opportunity to both increase the awareness of tools and to support the better use of tools. In some countries (particularly where tool use is more flexible) better awareness of the range of potential tools and what they can do is needed. Tool inventories can help to do this but there are also examples of inventories being underused, rationalised or dropped entirely (e.g. Italy; Netherlands). In most countries, better training and support of officials is needed to adequately use tools, especially quantitative tools such as CBA and SCM. This goes hand in hand with providing adequate resources and time for tool use. The quality of tool use can also be improved by better guidance (including worked examples) as well as proper scrutiny of IAs (especially by economists). The UK provides a best practice example in the level of support and scrutiny of tool use (in this case CBA). Desk officers are assigned an economist from their department to assist in the methodology. The results are then peer-reviewed by another economist before being signed off by the Chief Economist and the Minister. This can be an iterative process of checking and revision. In other countries, however, a lack of quantitative skills is seen as a significant barrier to IA (e.g. Ireland).

In addition to, or perhaps because of, the skills shortage there can be a strong cultural reluctance to engage with numbers. It is important to better understand the political, cultural, institutional factors which affect the appropriateness of certain tools (e.g. why certain apparently useful quantitative tools fail to get taken up?). Better communication between researchers and officials on what tools are available and what answers they can help them get is important but in other countries (e.g. Italy) the system is already in close contact with numerous high level experts. A lack of available data is frequently cited as an issue (see Figure 10, Annex III). There was also an interest in developing tools which help in qualitative assessment for example better tools for integrating different opinions (although many types of MCA already exist). Other areas of interest in tool development include: the better quantification of social and environmental impacts (especially benefits) and making tools more transparent and participatory.

Key messages for the LIAISE NoE: *There is more room for researchers to improve tool use in countries which are more flexible in their use of tools (e.g. Sweden). For some countries tool design and use is seen as something internal to policy-makers (e.g. UK; Ireland). In general, tools were not often seen as a main barrier to IA implementation.*

4. Conclusions

General Reflections

While the formalisation of IA could be seen as an attempt to standardise policy assessment, our survey of user needs and expectations reveals no one consistent message from policy makers. Instead it exposes the variation and complex nature of IA systems and user needs across Europe. IA systems vary enormously between countries. The IA system present is not necessarily determined by context but political and institutional context is apparently having a distorting effect on IA in the different jurisdictions studied. It is therefore important not to 'de-contexualise' IA, especially when considering what might be considered 'best practice' (Radaelli 2005, 742). The variety of IA systems and context means that there is no one 'right' set of guidance or tools, or indeed monolithic measure of 'user needs'.

On the contrary, there are very many factors which affect the quality of IA. Tool use (or the lack of it) is just one of these. Therefore a lack of tool use does not necessarily mean that more tools are needed or that they will result in a better IA. Also a good IA does not necessarily lead to a better policy decision. However, tool use is an issue which most countries struggle with in terms of which tools to apply and/or how to best apply them. Several factors appear to limit the ability of officials to use tools. Some of these can be addressed through LIAISE such as a lack of awareness of tools or how to apply them. However, the level of openness to IA systems to researchers varies depending on the IA system in each country. In general officials can be very concerned about every day micro-level problems such as a shortage of resources or the low motivation for conducting IA and also the lack of quality control. Certain policy problems and political and institutional setups may be more conducive for searching for test cases than others.

This survey shows that there is a gap between the potential for better tool use and the expressed needs of IA users, i.e. at the national level the expected demand across the board for IA tools is not evident. It is instead sporadic and often very specific. This provides opportunities for 'smart deployment' of IA tools rather than 'saturation'.

Implications for particular LIAISE Work Packages:

WP1: IA for sustainability: policy needs, assessment procedures and governance contexts
It is clear that IA is only one of many routes via which information feeds into decision making. IA also only one of many places (or 'venues') in which tools are used to generate information which may eventually feed into decision making. Therefore, it is important to explore how well IA links to wider systems of governance for sustainable development (i.e. D1.4), as well as alternative venues to IA.

WP2: Science for IA tools and procedures
It will be important to draw on wider science for help with developing tailored IA tools and assisting with analysis in the most helpful way.

WP 3, 4 & 5: Shared toolbox: back office; front office; and durability
User needs with respect to IA tools defy simple generalisations. Iit is clear that attempts to 'improve tools' must be aware that users are not monolithic. Therefore, IA tool development and deployment needs to be a very specialised and tailored process depending on the context and the needs of the users, which both vary over time. What is meant by 'improving' IA tools may vary widely depending on the perspective of the user. We recommend developing a set of standard questions for use by researchers when approaching each case of interaction between tools and users. These could gauge users' views on what tools are currently used, where the knowledge gaps are, and what tool developments are required. These may be different to the tool developers' opinions of research priorities; a negotiated co-development of research and practice may thus be required. We suggest that the Test Cases in WP6 are the most appropriate place to develop both these 'interaction questions' (through the WP6 Modules) and the co-development process, as well as bilateral links with WP1.

WP6: Test cases in sustainability priority areas
The diversity of purpose, context and user needs makes the test cases in Work Package 6 even more vital for LIAISE as a whole. Developing tools and procedures for assisting with policy assessment which are specific to each test case will yield valuable lessons for future engagement between researchers and policy-makers.

WP7: Dissemination and training
This survey has identified a large number of interested officials with a strategic role in IA in their country. This therefore presents a 'ready made' audience for LIAISE, many of whom are interested in feed back from the survey.

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Annex I: Country Fiche (Blank)

D1.3 Survey of User Needs/Best Practices/Test Case Ideas: documentary information
Country:
Prepared by:
Date:
Part A: Design and Practice of the IA System
IA Design
A.1 When was Impact Assessment introduced in this country? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE: Has its name/form changed since then? What are the key laws etc establishing the legal framework? What do these stipulate in relation to IA?]*
A.2 Why was IA introduced? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE: is it to reduce administrative burdens/ improve the quality of legislation/ improve communication and information flow/ achieve sustainable development?]*
A.3 Is IA voluntary or mandatory? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE: has this status changed over time?]*
A.4. What is the coverage of the IA system and what criteria are used to select policy proposals for assessment? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE]*
A.5 What is the relationship with other assessment systems in place? [*SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE* e.g. *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA); Administrative Burdens Assessment etc.*]
A.6 Is there an overall IA coordination unit and what does it do? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE]*
A.7 Is there an IA unit within each ministry and what does it do? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE]*
A.8 What recent developments have taken place in the IA system? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE: Key changes in the design, coverage, quality of IA - especially since 2006 when EVIA research was conducted]*
IA in Practice
A.9 What documentary records are produced? *[Please also give some indication eg are they very full covering many pages of text with lots of explanation/reasoning, or just short tick box exercises covering 2 pages?]*
A10. How many IAs are carried out? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE. Please give the number of IAs per annum for as many of the years from 2000-2009 as possible.*
A.11 At what stage in the policy cycle is an IA supposed to be carried out?

[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE: E.g. at an early stage – before ministry has drafted a proposal? at an intermediary stage - based on a proposal but before consultation? at a late stage – before proposal is submitted to parliament?]
A.12 How is this implemented in practice?
A.13 What guidance documents/expert resources are available/supposed to be consulted by those carrying out IAs? [*e.g. guidelines/ websites/ training courses/ economic analysis units. NB. Please send a copy to UEA for safe keeping]*
A.14 How are these guidance documents/expert resources implemented in practice?
A.15 What procedure is there for involving stakeholders? [*SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE*]
A.16 How well is this procedure implemented in practice?
A.17 Are the resulting IAs publicly available and easily accessible [*SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE eg centrally available in a systematic way on a website? published in an ad hoc manner? not published at all?]*
A.18 What do the guidance documents say about monitoring and ex-post evaluation? [*SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE]*
A.19 How well is this implemented in practice?
A.20 What types of impacts are generally considered in the IAs? [SEE B.2 of the EVIA COUNTR FICHE. *What is the range of impacts considered? Are economic aspects covered more or less than other aspects (i.e. social and environmental)? Does the Guidance specifically mention the integration of sustainable development as one of the roles of IA? How are trade-offs between economic, social and environmental objectives handled?]*
A.21 How much do officials rely on consultants to conduct IAs? [*especially the use of tools?]*
A.22 What quality control provisions/structures have been built into (if any) the IA system? [*Is there a process for quality control or a body in charge of monitoring quality control eg the Impact Assessment Board in the European Commission*]
A.23 What assessments/studies have been made to measure the quality of IAs and the IA system in this country? [*What academic and consultancy studies have been carried out - not already mentioned? What do these studies show? Has the quality of IAs changed as a result of them? In short, has there been 'learning'?*]
A.24 Do you have any other information/conclusions on the

practice/implementation of IA in this country? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE but please also add your own and/or others e.g. what are the key barriers to IA in this country?!]*

Part B – Tool Selection and Use
B.1 Are there any sources of guidance specifically relating to the use of tools? How comprehensive/useful do you think these are? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE: Is there a section on tool use in the guidance/ any online sources of information/ training on tool use? If so, please summarise these and if possible translate these directly, including a page number reference. What tools do they mention? e.g Cost-Benefit Analysis, scenarios, scientific models indicators, checklists etc.]*
B.2 How are methods and tools actually used in practice? *[SEE EVIA COUNTRY FICHE]*
B.3 Is there any evidence of IA tool inventories being used? *[Either inventories provided by the scientific community or otherwise]*
B.4 Is there any other information/conclusions that you feel are relevant to tool selection, decisions and practices?
Part C – References and Contacts
C.1 References [*Please list your references including academic references, consultant reports, government documents, previous research deliverables and websites etc.]*
C.2 LIAISE Contacts [*Please also fill in the LIAISE contact sheet – provided by Klaus- with suggestions of experts/stakeholders who may be interested in LIAISE more generally.]*

Annex II: Interview Fiche (Blank)

<table>
<tr><td>

Country:

Name of interviewee:

Institution/IA role:

How does the interviewee wish to be referred to [*see Preamble below*]:

Name of Researcher:

Date of Interview:

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Preamble: Introductions

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Introductions: *[Please introduce yourself and the project, the purpose of the interview: The main purpose of the LIAISE project is to identify and exploit opportunities to bridge the existing gap between the research and the policy community in the field of Impact Assessment, improving the use of IA tools in policy*
making. This interview is part of a series of interviews across EU member states gathering information on how and why IA is carried out in practice and particularly exploring user needs in relation to IA. In these interviews we are focusing at a strategic level, interviewing those people who champion, oversee, guide, audit or write guidance for IA processes. In the interview we will go through a series of prepared questions which I hope will take roughly one hour]

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Interviewee Consent Form:

1. Either:
[Introduce the consent form and hand a copy to the interviewee to read and fill in – make sure that you take this away with you and keep for your own records.]
[SHOW INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM]

2. Or (if you prefer):
[Ignore the consent form and instead verbally agree the basis on which the interview will take place and how the interviewee wants to be quoted (or not if he/she prefers) e.g. by name; as an official from the Romanian Environment Ministry; or a Romanian official.]

Note: Ideally, we would like ALL the interviews to be quotable if at all possible.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Preamble: About the Interviewee

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

P.1 What is your current position and responsibility with regard to IA?

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

P.2 How long have you been in this position*? [do you work alone/in team/size   of the team, background etc]*

</td></tr>
</table>

P.3 What is the best means of contacting you – email/telephone?

Part 1: Design of the IA system
A.1a What do you consider to be the purposes for doing IA in your country? *[first ask this as an open question]*
A.1b What do you consider to be the purposes for doing IA in your country? *[Please repeat the question showing the 'purposes of IA' sheet. The interviewee can choose more than one option]*   **[SHOW PURPOSES OF IA - SEPARATE SHEET]**
The quality of IA
A.2 When people talk about the 'quality' of IA, what do you interpret the term 'quality' to mean?
A.3 What do you perceive the quality of the IAs in your country to be?
A.4 Is the quality of the IAs controlled or monitored in your country?   • How is this done? [*eg is there a central quality control board? Is quality monitored in each government department?*]
A.5 What evaluations/studies have been made to measure the quality of IAs in your country? [*try and obtain copies of these studies if you don't already have them*]
A.6 What do you consider to be the most important two or three findings of these evaluations/studies?
A.7 Please give examples of one of two aspects which are going well as well as one or two aspects which are going less well*? [e.g. are the IAs being conducted early in the policy cycle? Are a range of impacts covered? Are the guidance documents adhered to well? Is there a good level of stakeholder involvement? Are there adequate resources allocated to IA?]*
A.8 In your opinion, how has the general quality of IAs in your country changed over time?
A.9 What has been done to improve the quality of IA in your country? *[e.g. is a conscious effort made to collect, disseminate and learn from 'best' or 'worst' practices?]*
A.10 In your opinion, what, if anything, could be done differently to improve quality?
The influence of IAs (and evidence more generally)
A.11 In your opinion, what influence do IAs have on the decision making process in your country?
A.12 In your opinion what influence do IAs have on policy outcomes eg laws etc in your country?

A.13 Can you give an example of any individual IA in your country which played an important role in shaping policy discussions?

A.14 What do you think are the main barriers to IAs being more influential in your country?

A.15 In your country, what other types of evidence are used in policy development apart from IAs? *[e.g. Task Forces, scientific commissions, expert advisory panels, parliamentary committees…]*

A.16 How important are these types of evidence compared to IA?

Part B – Tool Selection and Use
Describing current tool use

B.1 What, if any, tools are encouraged in your country's IAs?

[SHOW IA TOOLS – SEPARATE SHEET- For more details to the tool types see: Sustainability A-Test Inception Report on the WP 1 page of the wiki]
- o If none, why not?

B.2 If tools are encouraged, How are these encouraged? *[Is there a section on tool use in the guidance/ any online sources of information/ training on tool use? Does the central coordinating unit play a role?]*
- o How well is this advice followed?
- o Why?

B.3 Who actually uses the tools in the IA process and how? *[the officials themselves –establish as specifically as possible which types: policy developers, data managers, evaluators, technical experts? Or alternatively outside consultants? Or others …]*

B.4 Do you use any inventory of tools in your country? *[e.g IA Tools]*
- • If so, which ones?

Analysing current tool use

B.5 Are there any evaluations of how tools are used in your country? *[These could be academic evaluations/ research to develop tools, consultants reports, government evaluations…]*
- • What do these studies show?

B.6 What kinds of tasks do you think an IA tool should help perform? *[e.g. identifying policy options; providing data; monetarising costs and benefits; balancing trade-offs etc]*

B.7 Can you think of particular cases where tools have played a significant?

B.8 What role did these tools play?

B.9 Which policy areas or particular circumstances might be most amenable to tool use? Why? *[e.g. low degree of politicisation, unclear problem definition]*

B.10 What do you think are the main barriers to making more use of IA tools in your country? *[These barriers can be at the micro-level e.g there is not enough time or resources for officials to use tools adequately, but the barriers can also be at a more meso or macro-level e.g. there is pressure to support prior political preferences]*

B.11 Are you aware of occasions where expertise from the scientific community fed into the IA system in other ways apart from through tools? *[e.g. academic papers; expert advisors etc]*
- If so, how?

Improving tools

B.12 How do you think the scientific community could aid the use of tools? *[For example working with officials to make tools useful and applicable?]*

B.13 What do you think are the priority needs in tool development? *[more models, more data, more simple tools, better communication, concentrating on the circumstances when tools are most likely to be needed...]*

Part C: Options for test cases

Introduction: *[explain that LIAISE will be carrying out 'test cases'. These will test and analyze the application of tools in practice in selected 'real world' cases, to better understand the opportunities for, and obstacles to, greater use of IA and tools in policy making. The test cases may relate to ongoing IAs or IAs already completed. Cases are intended to involve two way learning and intensive collaboration between researchers and policy makers.]*

C.1 In your country, do you currently use 'test cases' and/or 'worked examples'? *[e.g. training type activities]*
- If so please give details. *[e.g. what was the purpose of the test case; who was involved; what was learnt?]*

C.2 Can you think of any good examples of IAs – either ongoing or already completed - which might be good candidates for LIAISE test-cases? *[please give the name of the RIA or legislation on which the RIA was conducted]*

Who should we contact about this? [*This might be the interviewee or another relevant official*]

Part D. Ending the interview

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

D.1 Would you like us to keep you updated about LIAISE?

D.2 Can you suggest anyone else who might be interested in LIAISE, and/or being interviewed by us?

D.3 Do you have further questions arising from this interview? *[interviewees may request to see a transcript or summary of the interview and/or any results of the research. If so, please explain that we are not making transcripts but can send a summary fiche to them.]*

Annex III: Results of the Interviews with Strategic IA Actors

Introduction

This Annex contains the aggregated results of the 5-10 interviews conducted in each country with those people who at a strategic level champion, oversee, guide, audit or write guidance for IA processes. A set of standardized questions was used to conduct these interviews (see Annex II).   A total of 124 interviews were coded and included in this analysis (5 of the total 129 interviews were not coded due to practical issues concerning the quality of the responses). Only those questions which resulted in responses which could be coded and thus quantified are included in this analysis. However, all interview responses were considered in the overall qualitative analysis of the main text of the Deliverable.

The interview responses have been aggregated across the different countries as our aim here is not to compare results between jurisdictions but to obtain an overall picture of IA in the 17 countries. For open questions (i.e. questions 1; 7a; 7b; 9; 10; 14; B1; B2) respondents were not limited to one response. Therefore the results of the interviews are given in percentage of responses and not percentage of respondents. In the case of closed questions (i.e questions 3;8;11;13) respondents only gave one answer.

Interview Responses

The Purpose and Context of Impact Assessment

As reported above, the main purpose of IA is not always made explicit and may be multiple as well as differ between actors. The interview responses confirm that sustainable development or the environment is seldom the main purpose of IA in most countries. Only 6.8 per cent of responses to the question 'What are the purposes for doing IA in your country' were for 'sustainable development' (see Figure 1). In contrast, the three most commonly suggested purposes were for: 'evidence based policy making' (20 per cent); 'increasing transparency' 18.9 per cent; and 'reducing regulatory costs' (17.5 per cent). (Interviewees were not restricted in the number of purposes they could suggest in response to this question – see above.)

Figure 1. Interviewee responses to the question 'What are the purposes for doing IA in your country?' (% of total responses)
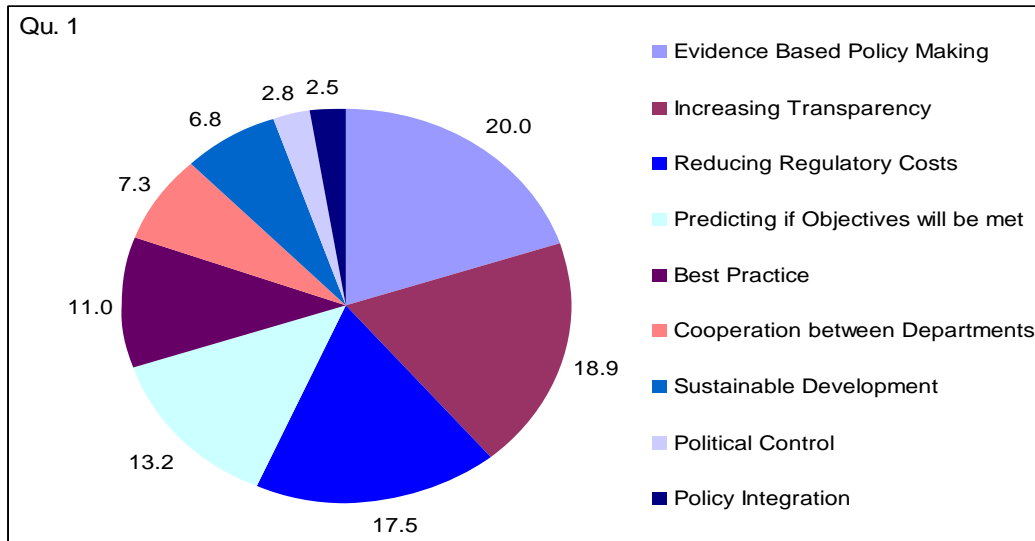
The Quality of Impact Assessment

A significant proportion of the interviewees thought that the quality of IAs in their jurisdictions was poor (41 .7 per cent) while 22.6 per cent thought that the quality was 'varied' and only 16.7 per cent thought that the quality of IA in their jurisdiction was good and 7.1 per cent thought they were adequate (see Figure 2). (Interviewees only gave one response to this question – see above.) Interestingly, a substantial 76. 3 per cent of respondents thought that the quality of IAs had increased over time (see Figure 3.)

Figure 2. Interviewee responses to the question 'What do you perceive the quality of the IAs in your country to be?' (% of total responses)
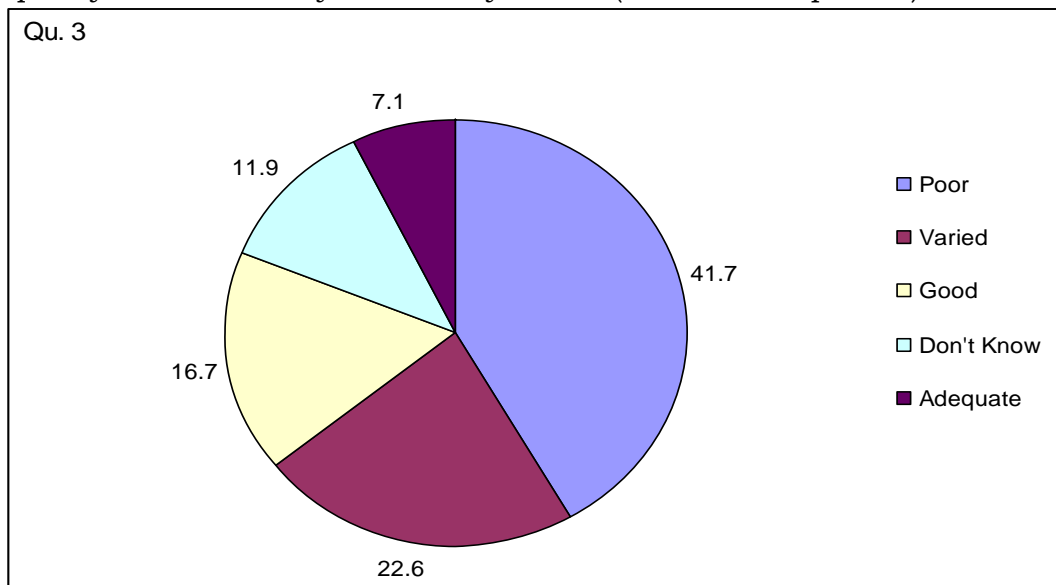
Figure 3. Interviewee responses to the question 'Has the quality of IA changed over time?' (% of total responses)

Qu. 8

Legend:
- No Change
- Increased
- Decreased
- Don't Know

Values: 6.5, 15.1, 2.2, 76.3
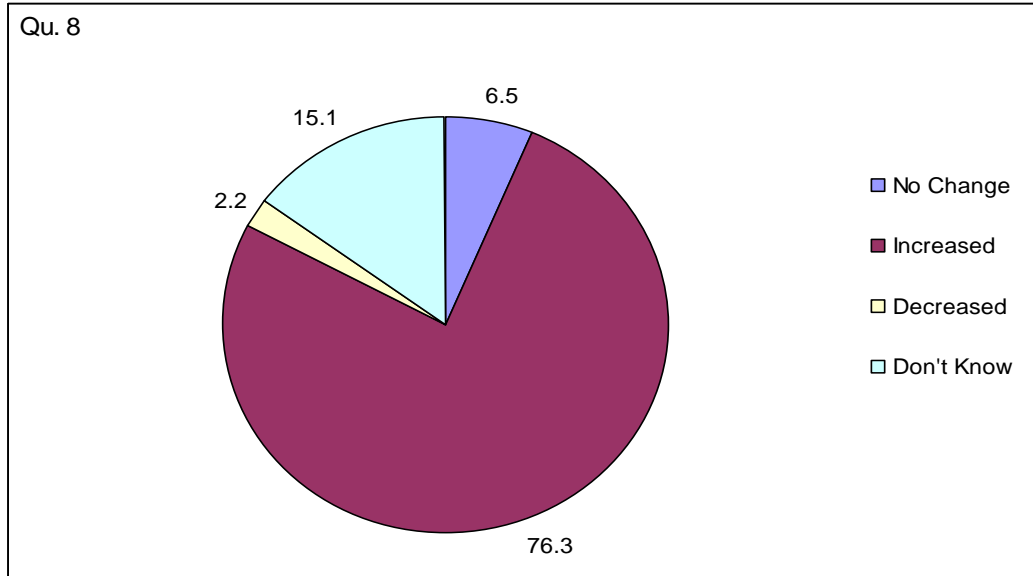
Interviewee responses are less clear, however, in specifying the various factors which help to make up quality. For example, while good IA guidance documents and consultation practices made up a significant number of responses to the question 'What is going well in IA in your country?', the largest proportion of responses were a disparate group of issues which could not be coded (i.e. 26.5 per cent were coded as miscellaneous) (see Figure 4). A similar wide range of answers was reported for the question 'What is going less well?' (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. Interviewee responses to the question 'What is going well in IA in your country?' (% of total responses)

Qu. 7a

Legend:
- Miscellaneous
- Good Guidance
- Consultation
- Administrative Burdens
- Right Questions Asked
- Range of Impacts
- Transparency
- Awareness of RIA

Values: 7.3, 8.1, 9.3, 9.3, 12.8, 12.8, 15.1, 25.6
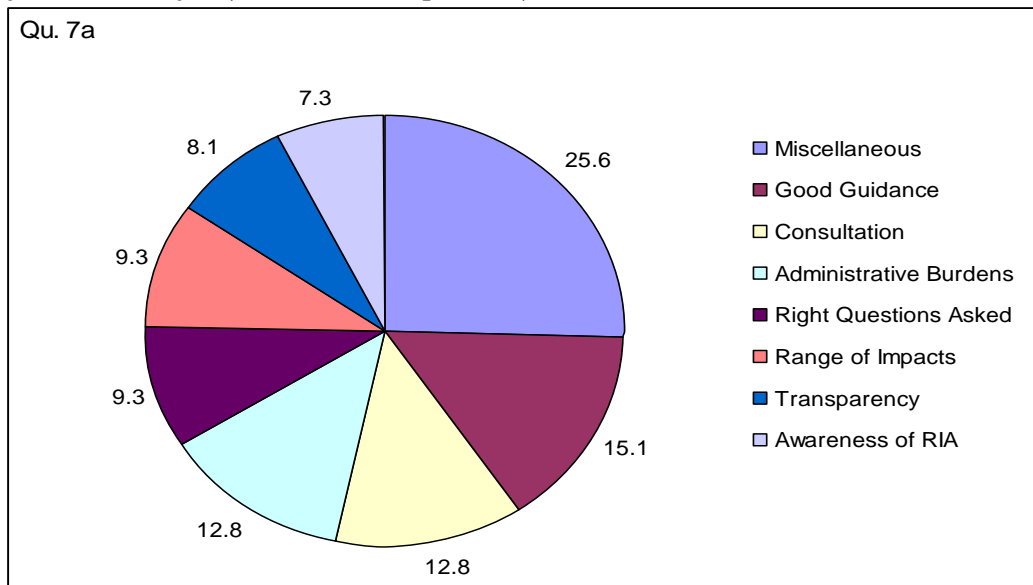
Figure 5. Interviewee responses to the question 'What is going less well?' (% of total responses)
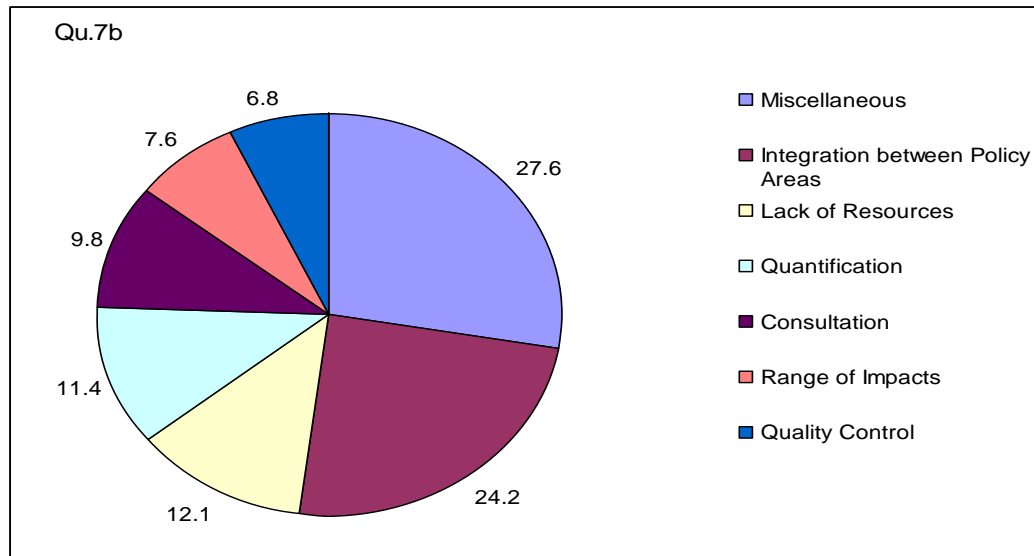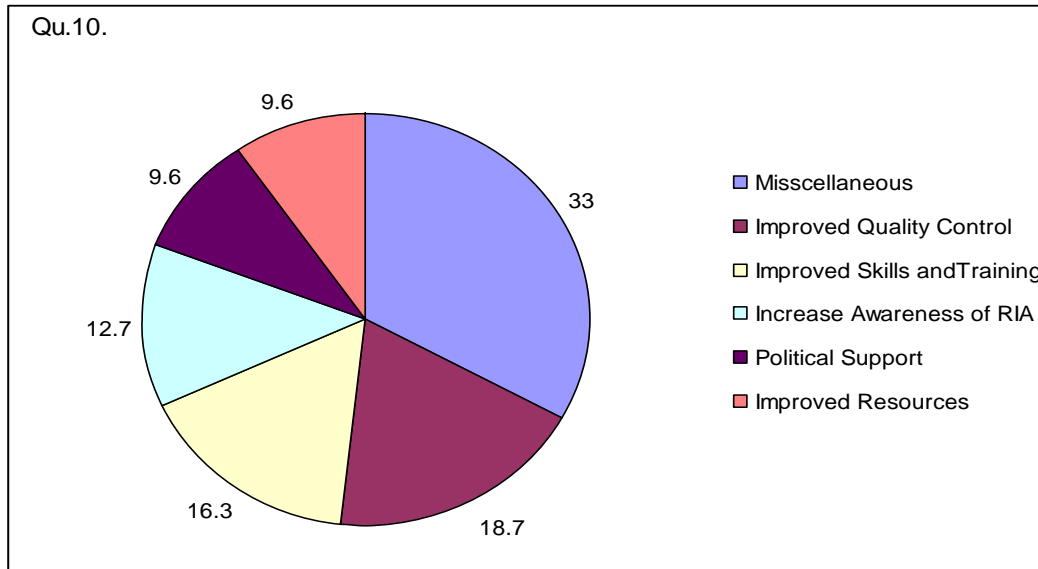

With regards to improving the quality of IA, the most common revisions of IA systems reported by the interviewees were changes to the guidance and general process (26.8 per cent), changes to training on IA (20.5 per cent) and the implementation of internal and/or external reviews (10.7 per cent of responses) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Interviewee responses to the question 'What has been done to improve quality?' (% of total responses)
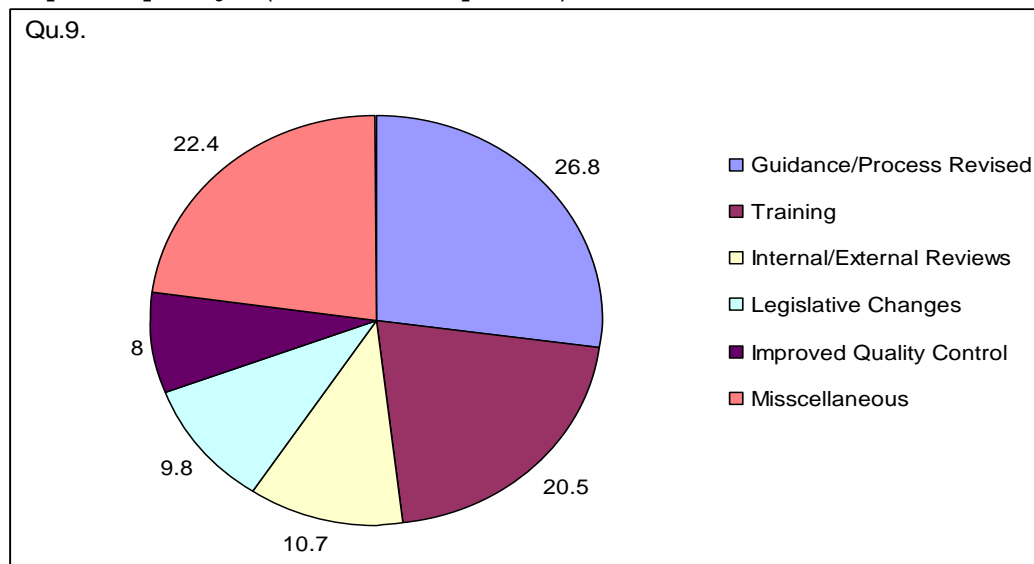
A variety of responses were given to the more abstract question 'What *could* be done differently to improve the quality of IA?' However improved quality control was the most common single response (18.7 per cent of responses) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Interviewee responses to the question 'What could be done differently to improve the quality of IA?' (% of total responses)

Qu.10.

- Misscellaneous
- Improved Quality Control
- Improved Skills andTraining
- Increase Awareness of RIA
- Political Support
- Improved Resources

Another way to think about quality of IA is to consider its influence on decision-making. It is interesting, therefore, that 46.8 per cent of respondents thought that IA had little influence is this regard while only 24.8 per cent thought that it had some influence and 5.5 per cent considering that IA had 'a lot' of influence on decision-making (see Figure 8). However, only about half of the respondents could actually give an example of an IA that had had an influence on the eventual policy decision (see Figure 9).

Figure 8. Interviewee responses to the question 'What influence do IAs have on decision-making?' (% of total responses)

Qu.11.

- Little
- Some
- A lot
- It Depends
- Don't Know
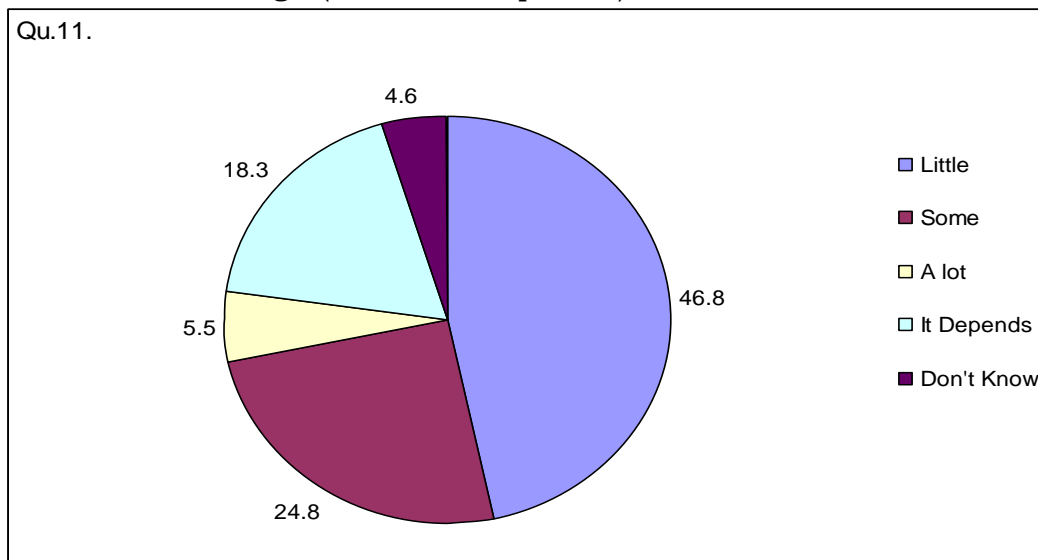
Figure 9. Interviewee responses to the question 'Can you give an example of an IA which played an important role in shaping policy discussions?' (% of total responses)

Qu.13.
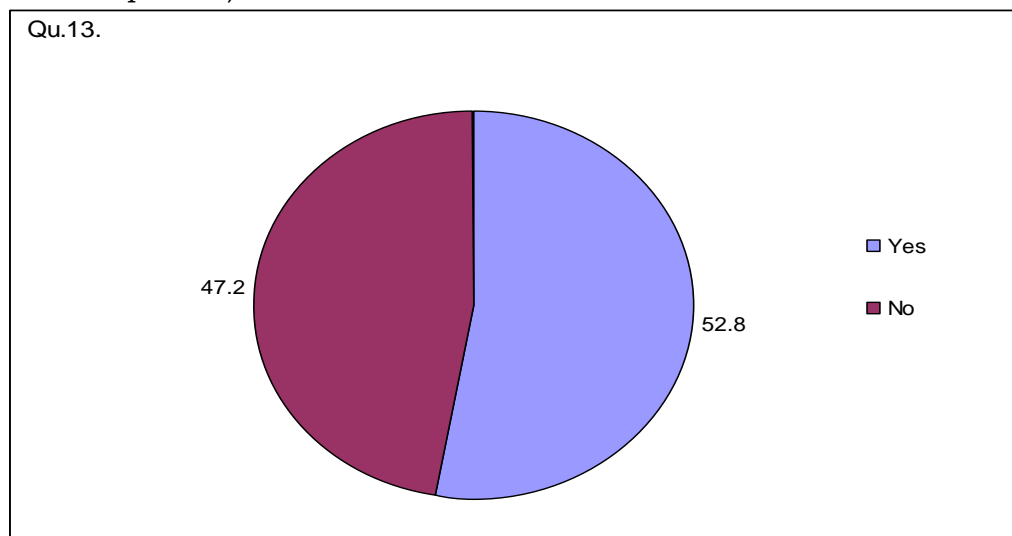
A follow up question attempted to explore some of the perceived barriers to IAs being more influential. However, again the answers to this open question were many and various. Internal culture of the departments and units was given as a common barrier (32 per cent of responses) (see Figure 10). A lack of (high level) political will was also cited as a barrier (16.7 per cent of responses). Other responses alluded to more practical manifestations of these barriers such as a lack of resources of time (11.5 per cent of responses), the occurrence of predetermined policies (9.8 per cent), as well as other practical difficulties such as a lack of data (9.2 per cent).

Figure 10. Interviewee responses to the question 'What are the main barriers to IA being more influential?' (% of total responses)

Qu.14.
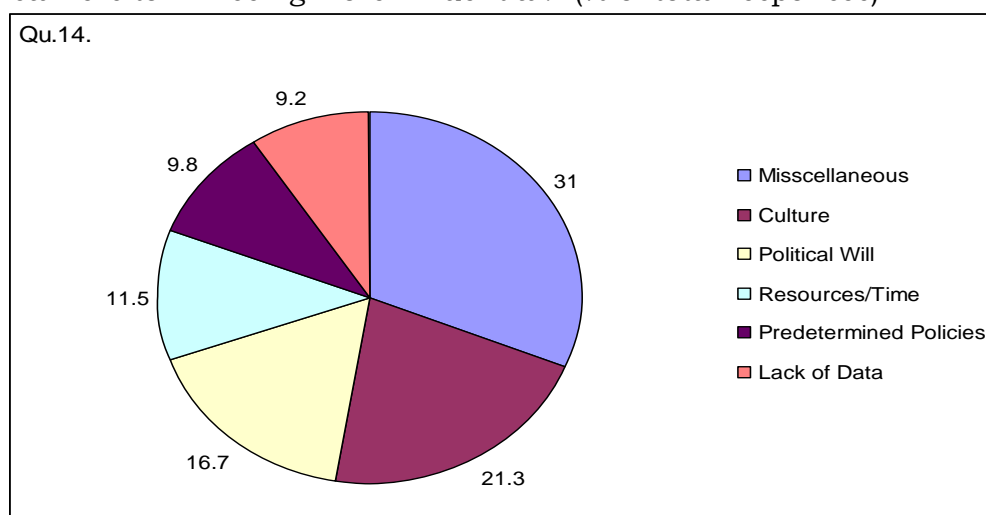
Impact Assessment Tools

The interviews confirmed that monetary tools, such as Cost Benefit Analysis and Cost Effectiveness Analysis, as well as simple tools, such as check lists and matrices, are the tools most commonly promoted and encouraged (see

Figure 11).Other tools, such as Stakeholder Analysis and Scenario Analysis, are much less frequently reported as 'encouraged'. Guidance documents and training were the most commonly cited methods of encouraging tool use (45.8 and 25.3 per cent of responses respectively) (see Figure 12).

Figure 11. Interviewee responses to the question 'What tools, if any, are encouraged in your country?' (% of total responses)
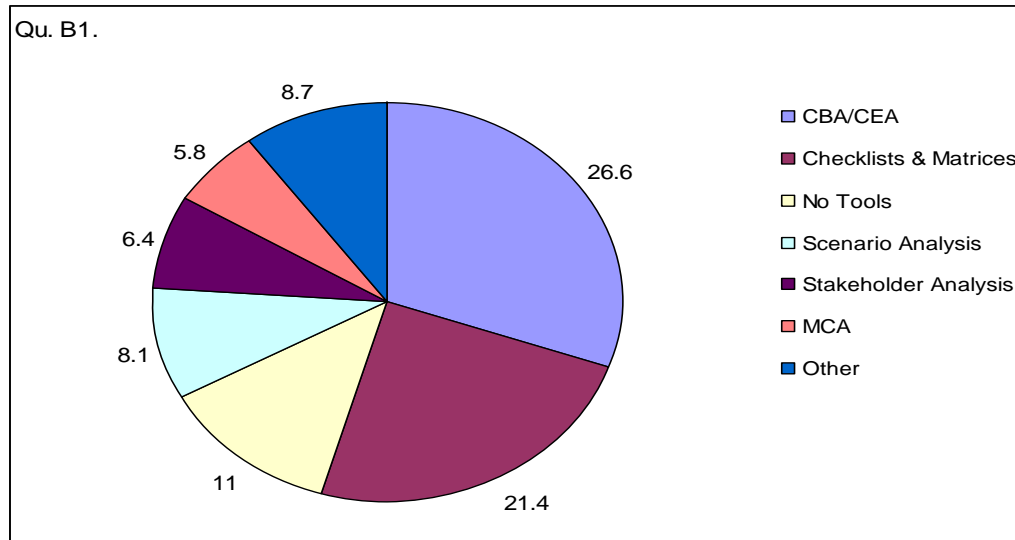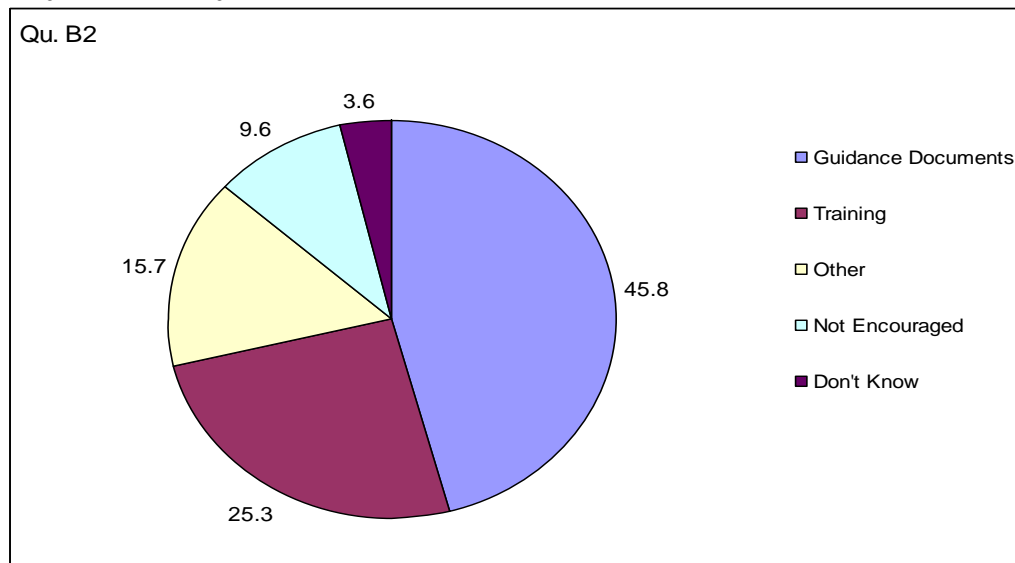

Figure 12. Interviewee responses to the question 'How are tools encouraged in your country?'

Annex IV: Results of Analysis of 325 Individual IA Reports in 8 Jurisdictions

Introduction

This Annex gives the results of detailed documentary analysis of tool use which was carried out on 325 individual IAs within eight jurisdictions where published IAs are reasonably easily accessible. While information available within published IAs is often rather limited, this is a first step towards understanding the relationship between patterns of tool use and the deeper motivations for carrying out IA. For each IA in each jurisdiction, where tool use was reported, this was categorised into one of five groups: Simple tools, Monetary Assessment tools, Physical Assessment, Modelling and Other (which included stakeholder analysis and multi-criteria analysis).

Results

The eight jurisdictions analyzed were: the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Greece, Finland, the European Commission, Poland, and Cyprus (Figure 13).

Figure 13. IA cases examined in different jurisdictions

| Jurisdiction	Number of IA cases (period)	Average length of IA report in pages
UK	50 (2007-10)	38
Ireland	49 (2004-10)	13
Denmark	50 (2006-11)	2.5
Greece	36 (2010-11)	17
Finland	50 (2009)	2.5
Commission	50 (2008-11)	84
Poland	20 (2008-10)	7
Cyprus	20 (2009-11)	14
TOTAL	**325**	

In the European Commission (Figure 14), more than 40 of the 50 cases used simple tools, and other tools such as MCA and stakeholder analysis are also prominent.

Figure 14. Tool types used in 50 sampled Commission IAs
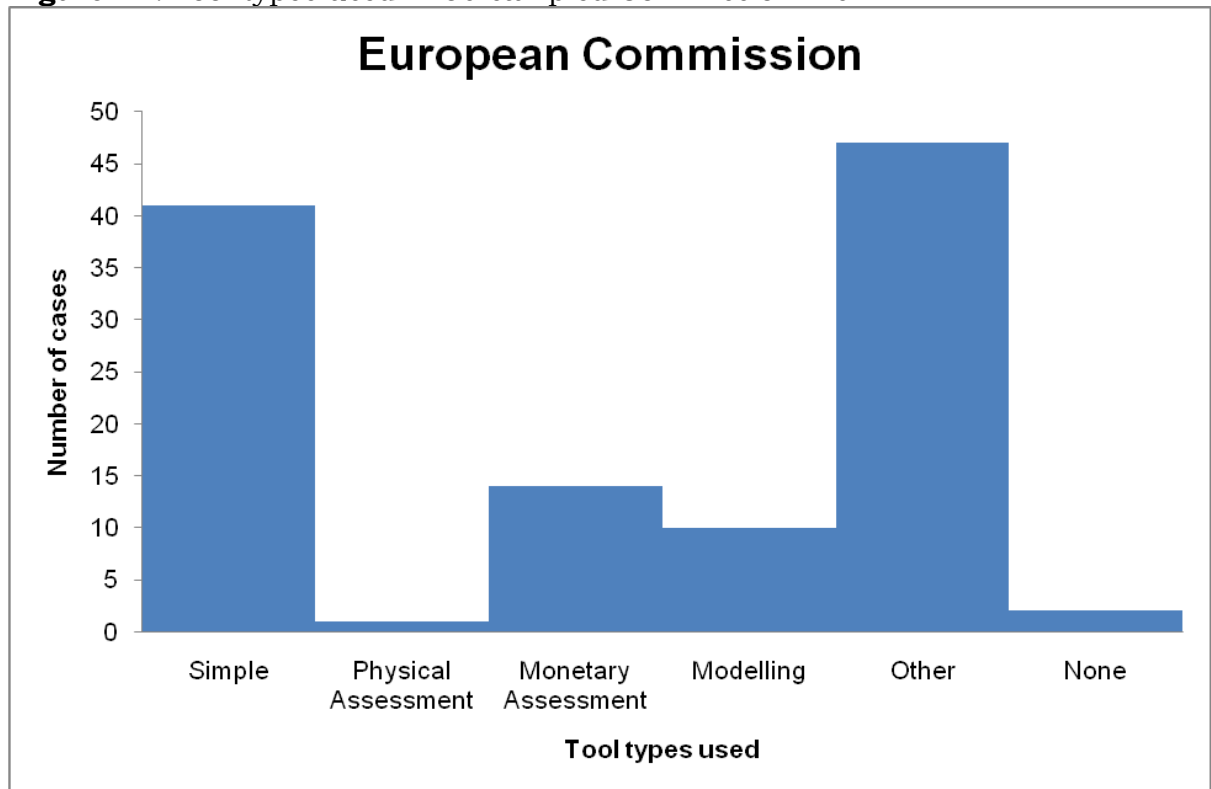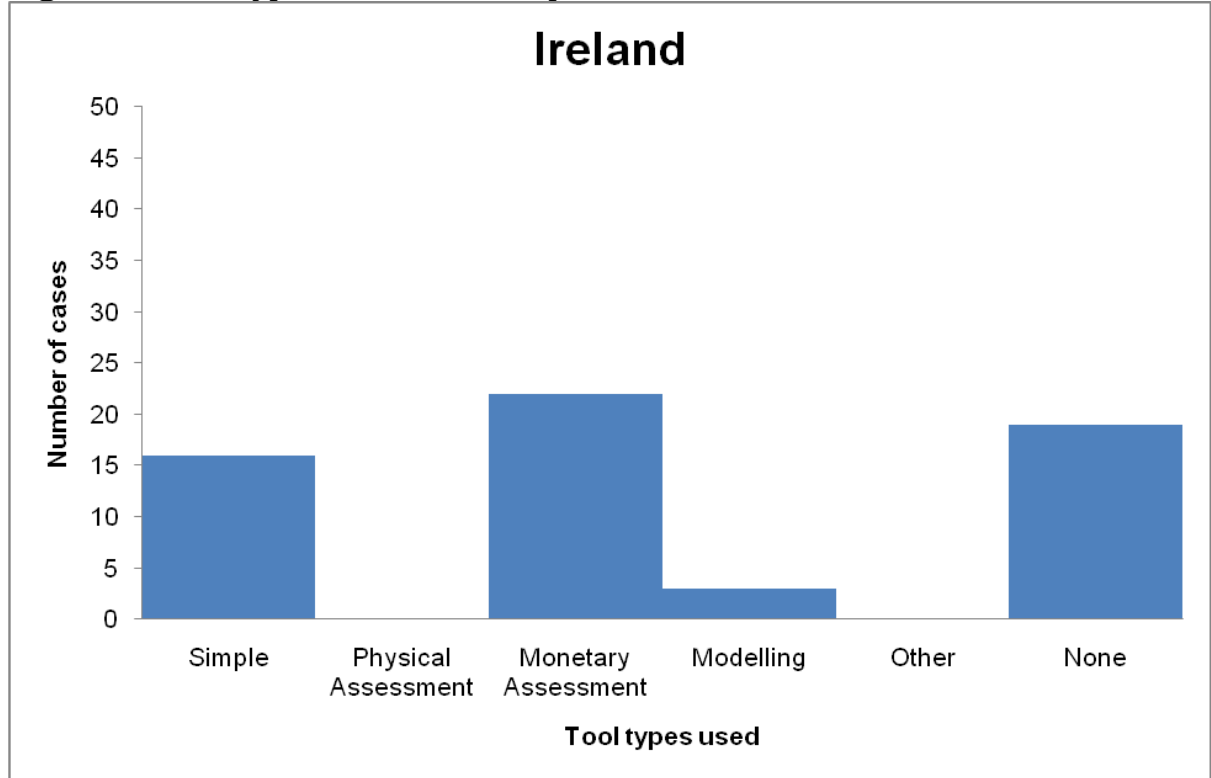

The UK, by contrast (Figure 15), shows greater use of monetary assessment and simple tools, both of which are mandatory in the IA guidelines. There are only a few cases which mention modelling tools, and these are mainly economic models used in policy areas such as transport and pensions.

Figure 15. Tool types used in 50 sampled UK IAs
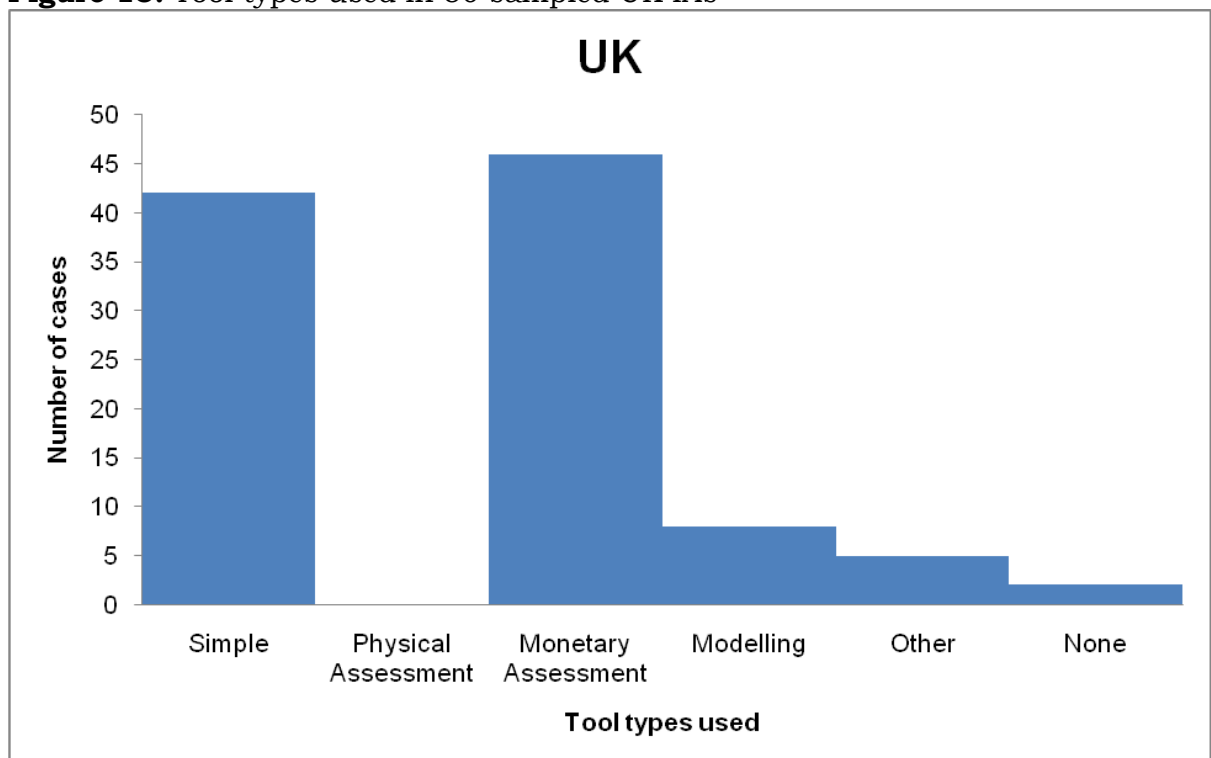
Ireland (Figure 16) represents a different type of jurisdiction with a much thinner reported pattern of tool use, with many more cases using no tools.

Figure 16. Tool types used in 50 sampled Ireland IAs

Denmark shows mainly use of monetary assessment and simple tools with some quantification, and again only a few cases mentioning modelling tools and/or physical assessment – mainly environment and tax policy. A significant minority of cases used no tools. Poland shows a similar pattern to Denmark. In the cases of Greece and Finland, more than half the IAs sampled used no tools, and no tools were evident at all in the reports from Cyprus.

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