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# LIAISE News Bulletin

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n.10 - 14/11/2011

**EDITORIAL** By Vivien Behrens (Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ ) and Theo Jetten (Wageningen University).

In January 2012 the Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ - will host in Leipzig a four-day training event for young and early career researchers: the LIAISE Winter School. The focus of this event will be on Impact Assessment (IA) as a general procedural framework for policy appraisal in decision-making processes. The LIAISE Winter School will combine different modeling strategies and approaches from the natural sciences as well as modeling in economics, and in the field of sustainability. Participatory approaches and the interrelationship between modelers and users of tools will also be addressed.

The Winter School will be part of the development and implementation of training curricula for IA researchers, which is one of the integral aims of the dissemination strategy of LIAISE. The theoretical and methodological activities for researchers will focus on capacity building at all levels on subjects such as: translating IA problems into researchable questions, development and testing of quantitative tools for IA, operational methods to enhance interdisciplinary research, methods for up- and downscaling, methods for uncertainty and post-model analysis. The main focus will be on the training and education of young researchers since they constitute the future researchers in this specific area. An International Education Programme in Impact Assessment for Sustainable Development will be developed as part of a PhD curriculum. Within this programme a variety of courses, seminars, discussion groups and yearly events will be offered and implemented in different research institutes which are part of the LIAISE NoE.

In the forthcoming months an inventory of existing IA training activities within the consortium which may be part of such a curriculum will be done. This involves two types of courses that are open to participants from outside the organizing institute: courses for early stage and experienced researchers in the field of IA for Sustainable Development, and in-depth cutting edge postgraduate courses. If you want to learn more about this work or contribute ideas to these activities, you are invited to contact the LIAISE team at [info@liaise-noe.eu](mailto:info@liaise-noe.eu).

## ■ ■ ■ LIAISE News

### ● **LIAISE Winter School "Tools and Modelling in Impact Assessment"**

LIAISE invites applicants for the LIAISE Winter School which will be held from 10–13 January, 2012 at the Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ in Leipzig, Germany. Its focus will be on "Tools and Modelling in Impact Assessment". The Winter School will be organized as a training course on discussing, using and developing especially advanced computer-based modelling tools and participatory approaches for policy assessment. The combination of different approaches will make the Winter School a truly interdisciplinary experience with lecturers from all over Europe. The deadline for application is 9 December, 2011.

### ● **LIAISE in the Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management**

The LIAISE NoE is being mentioned in the editorial of the September issue of the Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management. The journal editor attended a special session on "Impact Assessment - Opportunities and Challenges for Linking Science and Policy in the Quest for Sustainable Development" there, organised by the LIAISE Network at the 9th International Conference of the European Society for Ecological Economics in Istanbul. This session brought together impact assessment experts from different 'communities' (policy evaluation, environmental assessment and others). Once again, what was striking - the editor writes - was the very similar issues, problems and questions covered by these communities (e.g. "effectiveness"), but a frequent failure of them to link up in order to create valuable synergies. Many lessons are valid across community boundaries and there is no doubt that we need to communicate better, listen, talk and learn from each other!

### ● **Study on Civil Society Views on Concept of Green Economy**

A study of the Freie Universität Berlin on the views of European civil society on the concept of the Green Economy was submitted to the European Economic and Social Committee. The authors of the study analysed the discourses in the run up to the 2012 Rio Summit and surveyed the views of European Civil Society on the different issues which are currently under discussion. The study was presented to the Sustainable Development Observatory of the EESC on 17 October, 2011 in Brussels.

### ● **Advising the UK Parliament**

John Turnpenny and Andrew Jordan have been working to inform the work of the parliamentary environmental audit committee in the UK. In August John attended the first meeting of a new stakeholder group, which the committee has established to inform its current work and to plan new topics to investigate. In October Andy attended an away day in Keele University at which MPs met with academics to identify areas of common interest and identify topics for future studies. A number of topics were investigated including national impact assessment and the use of cost benefit analysis in central government decision making.

### ● **Presentation at OECD Annual Meeting of Sustainable Development Experts**

Andrew Jordan (UEA) and Klaus Jacob (Freie Universität Berlin) presented a paper "Sustainability in Impact Assessment" at the OECD Annual Meeting of Sustainable Development Experts (AMSDE) in Paris on 3 November, 2011. In the paper, the Impact Assessment procedures of a number of countries were examined, including the United States, Australia, Korea, Poland, and others. It is analysed if and how aspects of Sustainable Development are considered in the IA systems. The paper summarizes potentials and challenges for an integration of SD concerns in generic IA requirements.

### ● **Presentation to Edinburgh University Biosphere and Atmosphere Programme**

LIAISE member Dr. Jan Dick has given a presentation entitled "What can INTERACT do for you?" to the Edinburgh University Biosphere and Atmosphere Programme. INTERACT (International Network for Terrestrial Research and Monitoring in the Arctic) is a network of field stations situated in all eight Arctic countries which have received a grant from the EU to fund visiting scientists to foster international collaboration and provide a greatly improved understanding of environmental change in the Arctic and its impacts on local and global communities. The long term monitoring site in the Cairngorm, Scotland is part of this new EU FP7 infrastructure project.

### ● **Valuing Nature Network**

Researchers at the Universities of East Anglia, Aberystwyth and Exeter have been awarded funding by the 'Valuing Nature Network' (VNN) to develop a transdisciplinary VNN hub to investigate how values obtained from natural, social and economic sciences can best be integrated into governance to improve decision-making and implementation. This 'hub' – BRIDGE (Bridging the gap between supply and demand for valuation evidence) will address these aims through an iterative series of workshops. Key questions are: 1) How should valuation be improved if valuation evidence is to be more effectively integrated into decision-making? 2) What are the obstacles that limit uptake of valuation evidence by decision-makers and what research is needed to address these?

## ■ ■ ■ Publications from the LIAISE network

### ● **Appraising the Environmental Drivers of Migration**

A new report published by the UK government's Foresight programme reveals that the major challenges associated with migration and environmental change have been underestimated. UEA's Andrew Jordan contributed a background report to the study, which looked, inter alia, at how policy appraisal is (not) used by EU governments to coordinate policy interventions in the areas of environmental protection and migration.

- **Evaluation of Agricultural Policy Reforms in the European Union**

This report provides an overview of the main characteristics and structure of the current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its developments in the last 25 years in a changing environment within and outside the EU. This report further suggests improvements in the market orientation, competitiveness and risk management at all levels of the food chain, and pleads for clarifying the link between policy measures and objectives through better targeting, and strengthening evidence on which to base policies.

- **Chapter on 'Environmental Policy' in the International Encyclopedia of Political Science**

Andrew Jordan and David Benson have contributed a chapter on "Environmental Policy" to the International Encyclopedia of Political Science which appeared in November 2011.

- **EXIOPOL briefs: Bottom-up and Top-down approach for policy analysis**

On October 12 2011, the four-year EU-funded EXIOPOL project coordinated by FEEM, held its final conference in Luxembourg. The project's main findings are summarised in two briefs, representing the Bottom up and Top down approaches developed in EXIOPOL.

## Events

- **International Seminar on Sustainable Land Use and the Food Chain**

The current food crisis in East-Africa and soaring food prices in many other parts of the world have drawn renewed international attention to the burning issue of food security. In this context the International Society for Sustainable Development and Agriculture in collaboration with the Georg-August-University Goettingen, the Faculty of Resource Management, HAWK University for Applied Sciences and Arts, Hildesheim/Holzminde/Goettingen and the African Asian Studies Promotion Association organize an international seminar on sustainable land use and the food chain, to be held between 1-3 December, 2011.

- **Conference Session on National Integrated Assessment Models**

On the XXVth European Conference on Operational Research, a conference session on national integrated assessment models will be held. Abstract can be submitted via the conference website and the submission code 43117ca4 until 29 February, 2012.

- **Planet under Pressure 2012 Conference**

The conference, to be held in London, UK, from 26-29 March, 2012, aims to provide a comprehensive update of the pressure planet Earth is now under. It will discuss solutions at all scales to move societies on to a sustainable pathway. It aims at providing scientific leadership towards the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio+20. Three broad themes will guide the conference: Meeting global needs: food, energy, water and other ecosystem services, transforming our way of living: development pathways under global environmental change, governing across scales: innovative stewardship of the Earth system.

- **6th Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) World Congress**

The 6th SETAC World Congress / SETAC Europe 22nd Annual Meeting will be held from 20-24 May, 2012, in Berlin, Germany, on "Securing a sustainable future: Integrating science, policy and people". SETAC's (The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry) focus will be on integrating different views and disciplines, on balancing the conflicting interests of stakeholders and on addressing societal needs of the future. The goal is to develop a sustainability management framework with tools that have a positive impact on the global environment. While solutions may differ in different parts of the world, the theories behind credible solutions are global. "Think globally - act locally" will recapture its relevance at a time when urgent solutions are needed.

- **18th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference**

A call for papers has been issued for the Sustainable Development Research Society Conference (ISDR18) to take place in Hull, UK, from 24-26 June, 2012. The conference will address the issue of new views on economic systems, progress and transitions. Papers are invited on subjects, such as transitions to sustainability, innovation for sustainability, degrowth and steady-state economy, and post-normal discourses for sustainability. Deadline for paper proposals is 15 December, 2011.

## Policies

- **Rio Earth Summit Postponed Because of Clash with UK Queen's Diamond Jubilee**

Brazil has postponed the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to avoid a clash with the UK's Queen's diamond jubilee. The Rio+20 summit was scheduled for early June but has been moved back by two weeks (now planned to take place between 20-22 June, 2012) to avoid jeopardising the attendance of 54 heads of states and government from Commonwealth members. Brazil has not yet officially confirmed the date change, but president Dilma Rousseff indicated at the G20 meeting in Cannes that the summit would be postponed.

- **Fitness Checks to Complement IA?**

One of the first "Fitness Checks" to identify excessive burdens, overlaps, gaps, inconsistencies and/or obsolete measures of existing regulations was recently initiated on the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water. Fitness Checks look, inter alia, at: any barriers (including in other policy areas) to meeting the already agreed objectives; issues related to implementation and measures that could improve implementability; coherence of the legislation in place and whether there are any overlaps, inconsistencies and/or obsolete measures.

- **EEA Report No. 5/2011: Survey on Approaches to Resource Efficiency in Europe**

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has carried out a survey on approaches to resource efficiency in Europe. A total of 31 countries from across Europe responded to the survey. The survey showed that the Member States already took some action to transform Europe into a sustainable economy. However, there is no single definition of resource efficiency. That is why there are many different approaches to becoming more resource efficient to match the different national contexts. The results of this survey have been published in the EEA report no. 5/2011 "Resource efficiency in Europe - Policies and approaches in 31 EEA member and cooperating countries".

- **Legal Proposals for the Common Agriculture Policy after 2013**

The European Commission's proposals for a reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) after 2013 aim to strengthen the competitiveness and the sustainability of agriculture and maintain its presence in all regions, in order to guarantee European citizens healthy and quality food production, to preserve the environment and to help develop rural areas. On 12 October, 2011 the European Commission presented a set of legal proposals designed to make the CAP a more effective policy for a more competitive and sustainable agriculture and vibrant rural areas. The legal proposals are accompanied by an impact assessment that evaluates alternative scenarios for the evolution of the policy on the basis of extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis.

- **New Climate Study Deals Blow To Skeptics**

An independent study of global temperature records has reaffirmed previous conclusions by climate scientists that global warming is real. Although this is not a surprise, it has some obvious implications in the wake of 'climategate'. The new analysis by the Berkeley Earth Surface Temperature project examined 1.6 billion temperature reports from 15 data archives stretching back over 200 years in an effort to address scientific concerns raised by climate skeptics about the data used to inform reports published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Lead scientist at Berkeley Earth, Robert Rohde said that the study was the first to address issues concerning data bias and used nearly all available data, which amounted to five times more station locations (39,000 compared to 7,280) than reviewed by prior groups.

- **IAIA Intervention to the Rio+20 Process**

The IAIA Board made an intervention to the Rio+20 process to have IA and SEA text inserted into the Outcome Statement. IAIA urges the Rio+20 Conference Secretariat and the participant countries to consider, in the Conference Final Declaration, the adoption of the following statement: "Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Impact Assessment (IA) be recognised by States as effective high level decision support processes that can assist in the implementation of political commitment to Sustainable Development and Green Economy initiatives."

## Training

- **GESIS Spring Seminar 2012 on Social Science Data Analysis**

The 41st GESIS Spring Seminar will be held from 27 February - 16 March, 2012, on "Topics in Social Science Data Analysis: Causality, Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS and Mplus". The lectures will be given in English on "Causal Inference in the Social Sciences" (27 February-2 March), "Comparative Research with Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Models" (5-9 March), and on "Statistical Modeling in Mplus" (12-16 March).

- **PhD Training School: Sustainability Governance and REDD+**

This interdisciplinary PhD training school covers a range of topics relevant to REDD+ research and its broader context such as emerging architectures, agents, and accountability mechanisms underpinning REDD+ arrangements and governance. About 10 COST PhD students will have the opportunity to participate in a symposium and in several working groups. The workshop, to be held from 12-14 April, 2012, is organised by the REDD@WUR network, a network of about 80 researchers at Wageningen University & Research Centre who are actively engaged in REDD+ related research.

## Links

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- **Science for Environment Policy - News Alert Service**

"Science for Environment Policy" is a free news and information service published by the European Commission, Directorate General Environment. It is designed to help policy makers keep up-to-date with the latest environmental research findings needed to design, implement and regulate effective policies. The service publishes weekly newsletters, summarizing recent scientific publications and studies as well as special issues providing more background information on selected topics. Subscription is possible online.

- **French-language Portal on Desertification**

Médiaterre is a french-language online portal covering issues such as desertification and the degregation of land, as well as policy-news on sustainable development and publications. The Médiaterre site, sponsored by La Francophonie (OIF), has been publishing news on sustainable development issues for the Francophone world since 2002.

- **Learning Platform on Climate Policies**

Established in 2011 by the French Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), the Learning Platform on Climate Policies (LP) is an independent forum for the exchange of policy expertise and experiences between developed and developing countries. This initiative aims at building an international network of energy and climate policy experts, gathering all the relevant stakeholders in the partner countries and relying on IDDRI's extensive network, developed at the international level for a decade. For its first implementation year, the LP involves the European Union and the two Asian giants that are China and India, which already account or will account for a large part of global GHG emissions.

- **INFORSE - International Network on Sustainable Energy**

INFORSE is a worldwide network consisting of 140 Non Governmental Organisations working in about 60 countries to promote sustainable energy and social development. The Network was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to secure follow-up in the political decisions at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). INFORSE is actively engaged in international awareness rising. INFORSE follows and influences sustainable energy issues in international negotiations and is accredited to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1998.

- **Think Tank Map by International Center for Climate Governance**

The Think Tank Map is a new observatory, developed by the International Center for Climate Governance (ICCG), that provides an overview on the think tanks active in the field of climate change governance, allowing in-depth studies about their influence on policy and facilitating their networking activities. The Think Tank Map consists of a series of interactive maps on which the locations of all the think tanks that are part of the observatory are pinpointed. It is possible to display all the think tanks on the map, or just the ones working in a specific field of research, or to look up the ones located in a particular country. For each think tank, the relevant information about its current projects and activities are presented.

## Jobs & Funding

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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](mailto: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.

