

*Branch of the*



## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT UPDATE IRELAND-UK BRANCH OF IAIA:**

**December 2008 / January 2009  
Newsletter**

[www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org)

> 'Affiliates and Branches'  
> 'Ireland-UK Branch'

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### **Been forwarded this newsletter? Why Not Join the IAIA**

The International Association for Impact Assessment exists to improve and better inform the decision-making of today that has environmental consequences for tomorrow. The IAIA is the leading global networking organisation on impact assessment for sustainable decision-making, providing an international forum for communicating information on best practice and innovation. It is truly a multi-disciplinary organisation covering the many aspects of impact assessment, and has 1500 members in more than 120 countries, including private and public sector planners and managers, consultants and policy analysts, university and college lecturers, researchers and students, and community bases.

### **Who Should Join**

Individuals and organisations in research, industry, government, community groups, consultancies or educational institutions - those who want to be more informed, more effective participants in the development of better environmental outcomes. See [www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org) for full details of membership services and benefits.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Members,

Welcome to the IAIA Ireland-UK Branch Newsletter 'Impact Assessment Matters' for December 2008 / January 2009. This brings together recent news of legislation, guidance, consultations and events relating to impact assessment.

Since the October 2008 newsletter, emails have been sent to members on:

- Branch / IEMA event: SEA Forum, Leeds, October 2008
- Branch event: Upgrading Impact Assessment, Oxford, December 2008
- Nominations for the next Branch organising committee 2009-10

For the next Branch newsletter (March/April 2009), please email any contributions to [ie\\_uk@iaia.org](mailto:ie_uk@iaia.org), with 'IAIA Branch news' in the subject line.

You can also always circulate any more urgent items to all IAIA Branch members on the listserv by sending an email to [ie\\_ukbranch@iaia.org](mailto:ie_ukbranch@iaia.org).

Adam Boyden

Associate, Nicholas Pearson Associates

Chair, IAIA Ire-UK Branch, on behalf of the Branch Committee 2006-08

## IAIA Events

- IAIA 2009: the next IAIA international conference will be in Accra, Ghana in **May 2009**. See [www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org) for details.

## IAIA Newsletters

The **October 2008** and **January 2009** IAIA newsletters are available for members to login and download at [www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org) > login > Publications > Newsletter Members.

## The Ireland-UK Branch of IAIA

Membership of the IAIA in Ireland and the UK comes with the added value of automatic membership of the **Ireland-UK Branch**. In 2005, the regional Branch was created, which aims to promote interaction between impact assessment researchers at leading Irish and UK universities with professionals in the field.

The existence of the Branch provides additional benefits to members, including:

- Additional networking opportunities at IAIA Branch events with reduced costs;
- Branch Newsletter with domestic impact assessment news, events listings and members' contributions;
- Opportunities to contribute to the promotion of impact assessment interests at national level;
- Branch webpage.

For more information on the Branch please see [www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org) and follow > Affiliates and Branches > Ireland-UK Branch ([www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354](http://www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354)).

## 2. BRANCH NEWS

### 1. Past Branch event: Upgrading EIA for Greater Effectiveness, Oxford Brookes University; 4 December 2008

"IAIA Ireland-UK Branch and Oxford Brookes University joined together to hold a seminar entitled 'Upgrading Impact Assessment for greater effectiveness'. The meeting was sponsored by Atkins and Peter Brett Associates, who also provided speakers.

The seminar was designed to cover something of the evolution of EIA, on-going developments in the field and possible future areas of interest. Presentations included:

- the specific case of developments at Ebbsfleet over the last decade (Dermot Scanlon, Peter Brett Associates);
- Trends in SEA and SA (Riki Therivel of Levett-Therivel and Oxford Brookes);
- the changing legal scene for impact assessment (Joe Weston of Oxford Brookes).

Further topics also covered included:

- the value of environmental management systems and plans (Lisa Palframan of University of Hertfordshire, and Josh Fothergill of IEMA);
- an ecosystem approach to SA (Eoghan Daly, Collingwood);
- SEA and marine planning (Kath Winnard, Atkins).

Whilst much of the day related mainly to impact assessment practice in the UK, three speakers from Oxford Brookes took on broader topics:

- Bridget Durning discussed the application of the Equator Principles for EIA in non-OECD countries;
- Prof. John Glasson gave a stirring presentation of the EIA system of Western Australia; and
- Elizabeth Wilson considered the limited past and necessary future inclusion of climate change in both EIA and SEA.

Whilst the day was packed and presentations were necessarily short, the seminar was very well received by the 45+ participants, who came from consultancies, developers and NGOs/universities across the UK and Ireland. Each of the four sessions was followed by opportunities for Q&A and a longer breakout session was designed to provide a time for participants to discuss other burning issues in the field.

Further seminars offering CPD are planned by Oxford Brookes for 2009 (at least one in association with IAIA); to learn of future plans you are encouraged to check their CPD website later in the spring of 2009:

[www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/index.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/index.html)

Or you can register for email notification of events with Karen Hughes: [khughes@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:khughes@brookes.ac.uk)

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The day's presentations are also now available at:

[www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/courses/uia supplements.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/courses/uia supplements.html)

## 2. IAIA Special Topic Meeting on Cumulative Environmental Effects, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November 2008, Calgary, Canada

John Fry, Branch chief travel correspondent, writes:

"I have managed to attend each annual conference since joining IAIA, but this was my second special topic meeting - and, like the Prague SEA meeting, it was very rewarding. Not surprisingly, there was a large Canadian presence, but Ireland-UK Branch representation included Josh Fothergill of IEMA and Michael Owens of the Irish EPA (those were just the ones I got to drink with).

The meeting was devised as a fund-raiser to support Barry Sadler's new study of EIA effectiveness, but it was far more than a pot-boiler. Stalwarts Barry, Larry Canter and Bill Ross cumulatively delivered an able job of scene-setting, as well as trying to grope towards solutions.

Barry tried to counter his obvious pessimism about the future with talk of a next level in impact assessments. Some, including Angus Morrison-Saunders, wondered if we needed *another* procedure, but I think there was only a semantic difference between these positions. Rather than separating EIA & SEA, Angus seemingly argued for a single impact assessment framework that was elastic enough to be applied to any proposal (surprise, surprise, he could suggest the Western Australian model as an example...). An American delegate reminded us that this sounded a bit like NEPA., and it does resonate with rumours that the EU might be trying to amalgamate the EIA & SEA Directives.

My carry home message (picked up from Larry but reinforced by several speakers) was that we should stop thinking about the proposal *per se*, and consider impacts from the perspective(s) of the VECs (*Valued Ecosystem Components*). If the regulatory procedure and the decision-maker are both VEC-centred (e.g. "*I am water, how much more of (anything) can I tolerate?*"), then it should be possible to get a more unified and elastic process that can address individual and cumulative effects from all types of proposals. If '*Ecosystem*' in VECs is read as '*Environmental*' then there's scope for incorporating the social environment - the only untested concept being how might you integrate the various separate VEC assessments???

Pressing teaching engagements meant that I couldn't stay for the closing plenary, but the final cumulative effect of the meeting was the Western-pancake breakfast (surprisingly, no cholesterol warning attached) that set me up for my travels home."

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For further information on the Special Topic Meeting, please see [www.iaia.org](http://www.iaia.org).

## 3. Past Branch event: SEA Forum, Leeds, 23 October 2008:

The Joint Branch and IEMA Regional SEA Forum in Leeds went well with over 50 attendees making the day both lively and useful. Chaired by Jo Murphy of the Environment Agency, the event considered how integration of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) can make it more efficient and effective; including presentations from the CLG, Natural England, the Environment Agency, IEMA (Branch committee member Josh

Fothergill), the Academy for Sustainable Communities and leading practitioners including Ben Cave (IAIA Health Section Chair).

Presentations were given on: the Government's views on streamlining Local Development Frameworks and SA/SEA, downward integration (environmental issues between plans and projects), lateral integration (assessing cumulative effects), Habitats Regulations Assessments, Health Impact Assessments, producing integrated and effective Environmental Reports, and reflections of the skills and knowledge required for effective sustainable development appraisal. Breakout sessions on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and managing water (strategic flood risk assessment and the Water Framework Directive).

The day's presentations are now online on IEMA's website:

[www.iema.net/index.php/event-reports?cid=93&aid=18541](http://www.iema.net/index.php/event-reports?cid=93&aid=18541)

#### **4. Past Branch Event: 'Towards World Leadership in Effective Environmental Assessment?', May 2008, Glasgow**

A 3-part workshop event was organised by the Branch and IEMA's Scotland West Region on 14th, 21st, 28th May 2008 at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, which was sponsored by Jacobs. Iain Hossack, joint event organiser, writes,

"Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Scotland is different to that in other countries. Since the introduction of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the scope of SEA is much wider, with an intention to be applied to all public sector plans and programmes in Scotland. There are many reasons why such a widening of the remit for SEA was introduced in Scotland. Not least was the consideration that such a wide remit of application would generate significant Scotland-wide expertise on a subject that is considered to be in its infancy. Since the introduction of the Act, responsible authorities, consultation authorities and consultants alike have all now acquired a considerable wealth of experience; explained, in part, through the application of environmental assessment to a significantly wider range of plans and programmes than just mainly land use plans. Since its implementation many aspects of the interpretation of the Act and its application have been the subjects of many informal debates in Scotland. Allied to this there have been various proposals and calls to explore SEA's effectiveness in general.

In response to a growing desire to explore SEA's effectiveness in Scotland a series of three workshops was launched in May 2008. The workshops were prepared through a partnership between the Ireland-UK Branch of IAIA, the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), the University of Strathclyde and environmental consultants Jacobs. Its purpose was to explore SEA's effectiveness in Scotland, with "effectiveness" for SEA being interpreted as significant environmental improvement. Thus it was considered that the workshops should be an informal environmental assessment of SEA in Scotland.

There are various approaches in which to assess SEA's effectiveness. One way is to examine comprehensive material evidence and compare and contrast, in respect of intentions, output and indicators of environmental reports. Another is to gather local knowledge and feedback from those charged with directly implementing the Act. From knowledge of previous seminars it was recognised that the latter, "bottom up" approach, gathering feedback from those directly charged with implementing SEA, had rarely been examined if at all. Such persons include environmental officers, SEA consultants and local authority staff. They are considered to be in possession of first hand experience and knowledge, potentially able to identify significant, previously hidden, challenges to meaningful

environmental assessment and improvements. Therefore, from the outset, the emphasis was on gathering the opinions of those at the front line; persons with direct experience of implementing SEA.

Session one (May 14<sup>th</sup>) was designed to explore the baseline, looking at the current state of SEA in Scotland, through enquiry of the attendees. Session two (21<sup>st</sup> May) considered the scope for SEA, enquiring about Scotland's aspirations for SEA, with the assistance of three key speakers. The final session (28<sup>th</sup> May) considered the alternative options available to maximise environmental opportunity through SEA, once again through delegate participation.

The workshops were kicked off by an opening address from Barbara Carroll, Chair of the IEMA Environmental Assessment Specialist Interest Group and IAIA member, quickly followed by a break-out session for the attendees to consider Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the current state of SEA in Scotland. There were four break-out rooms, each relating to one of the four SWOT topics. The groups each nominated a spokesperson who prepared bullet-point style issues on a large A1 sheet of paper. Each of these four sheets, one for each SWOT issue, was then relayed to the other groups. After a twenty-minute discussion, the attendees were then instructed to rate the issues that were most important to them. Each attendee was given eight labels. They could use them in any combination from either eight separate issue or eight labels for one issue, to support an attendee's desire to rate their level of strength of opinion.

The second workshop provided a more traditional conference style with three presentations and a question and answer session. Dr Thomas Fischer, Reader at University of Liverpool and Chair of IAIA's SEA Section, provided a world-wide scope of good practice for SEA, providing thought provoking trends and directions. Dr Fiona Simpson, SEA Specialist from the Scottish Government Planning Directorate, provided her perspective from her own internal SEA deliveries and from SEAs presented to the Scottish Government. Finally, Dr Dan Barlow, Acting Director for the World Wildlife Fund (Scotland) presented a view from the perspective of non-governmental organisations. Thereafter the attendees were invited to list options that could deliver improvements to SEA; first of all in groups of three but then "snowballing" options which gain consensus into continually larger groups, until a short-list of twenty options were generated.

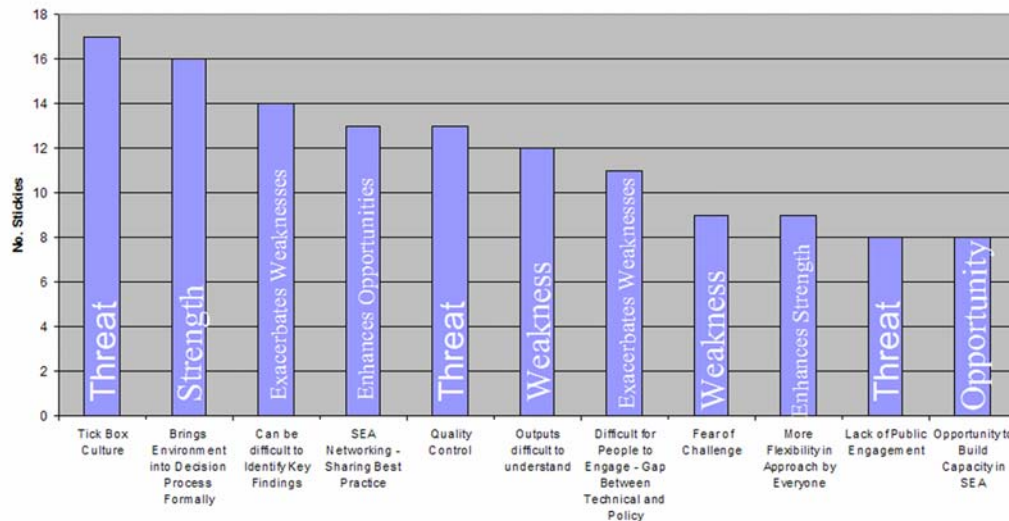
In the final session, the groups were provided with the results of the first and second session and then separated into break-out groups of three. Each group was tasked with identifying alternatives for more effective SEA, culminating in a question and answer session at the end. The final outcomes left open the options for more effective delivery, to assist the preparation of a future joint event.

Table 1 below presents the output from session one. It highlights the SWOT ratings of the attendees and, from left to right, can interpret an emerging story of the current state of SEA in Scotland. Ultimately, the attendees expressed considerable frustration at the lack of flexibility within the SEA process. They recognised SEA's potential to deliver significant environmental improvements and raise environmental awareness. But there are significant threats, including an emerging "tick box" culture, which stems from a fear of challenge and a lack of flexibility in approach. There is a difficulty of understanding key outputs and identifying key findings that, ultimately, makes it difficult for people to engage in the process. It hints this is a significant reason why there is little public engagement, another threat to the process. Nevertheless there is an opportunity to build capacity, enhanced by sharing good practice and, if everyone facilitates a more flexible approach, it can enhance the consideration of the environment in

decision making. Just what are the optimum alternatives, is still a subject of research and future sessions."

## Towards World Leadership in Effective Environmental Assessment?

SEA Baseline ?



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## 5. Elections to Branch Committee

The Branch organising committee of 9 members was established in 2006 for a period of 2 years, and have overseen the activities of the Branch to date. A new Branch committee needs to be formed of interested members from 2009.

John Fry's email to members on 22 October 2008 called for nominations to the next Committee. An update will be provided separately to members by email early in 2009. Thanks to those who have responded to the calls for interest!

## 6. Call for Future Branch Events

If you have any ideas (themes, locations, speakers) for possible future Branch events, or would like to consider hosting or collaborating on an event, we would like to hear from you. Please email [ie\\_uk@iaia.org](mailto:ie_uk@iaia.org).

## 7. Recent Publications by Branch Members

The following recent publications have been authored by IAIA Ireland-UK Branch members:

- Turpin, T., 2007. Dam. Reaktion, London.  
Trevor Turpin, Director at Nicholas Pearson Associates, traces the development of dams from the industrial revolution to the present day through a number of themes - both successes and failures - including the extension of the design teams forming an alliance between engineering, architecture, landscape architecture and ecology.  
See [www.Reaktionbooks.co.uk](http://www.Reaktionbooks.co.uk) or contact [trevor.turpin@npaconsult.co.uk](mailto:trevor.turpin@npaconsult.co.uk) for details.
- Jackson, A, forthcoming 2009. The diagnosis and treatment of disparities in United Kingdom regional economic performance: a critique. International Journal of Sustainable Society. InderScience Publishers.

## 3. IMPACT ASSESSMENT NEWS

### 1. River Basin Management Plans Published for Consultation

On 22 December 2008, draft River Basin Management Plans were published for public consultation in both the Republic of Ireland and the UK, marking a milestone in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) in the region. The Directive requires Governments to take a holistic approach to water management, and requires that River Basin Management Plans are prepared every six years to cover all types of water body (such as rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater) within each defined river basin district. Member States must aim to achieve good status for all waters by 2015 and ensure that status does not deteriorate in any waters. In brief, the draft plans outline the current status of waters in the river basin district, the proposed environmental objectives for waters, and the measures which may be necessary in order to achieve these objectives.

The plans are also accompanied by Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Reports, to assess the environmental effects of the actions proposed. The public consultations run from 22 December 2008 until **22 June 2009**. The documents can be found at:

- Ireland (8 river basin districts, including 4 wholly within the Republic of Ireland, 1 wholly within Northern Ireland, and 3 international districts):  
[www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/river\\_basin\\_planning.htm](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/water/wfd/river_basin_planning.htm) and [www.wfdireland.net/](http://www.wfdireland.net/)
- Scotland (2 river basin districts, including Solway Tweed):  
[www.sepa.org.uk/water/river\\_basin\\_planning.aspx](http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning.aspx)
- England and Wales (11 river basin districts, including Solway Tweed):  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33106.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33106.aspx)

## 2. Ireland's EIA Court Cases

In 2008 the ECJ gave two judgments against Ireland relating to EIA. The first (*C-215/06 Commission v Ireland*) related to a wind farm that was found to have been allowed to develop without proper impact assessment and, in particular, ruled against the Irish practice of being able to apply for *retention permission* for projects that have 'anticipated' planning consent.

The second (*C-66/06 Commission v Ireland*) is probably more universal in application, and essentially ruled that Ireland's EIA screening procedures were inadequate. The Republic's system (a combination of comparatively low absolute thresholds for Annex II projects and local planning authority discretion to demand sub-threshold EIA) had still managed to overlook some projects that the Commission considered should have been assessed.

Dr. John Fry, UCD Dublin [john.fry@ucd.ie](mailto:john.fry@ucd.ie)

## 3. Request for Assistance: UK Research on Noise and EIA

The UK's Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra) has recently appointed a team headed by acoustic consultants Rupert Taylor to review the effects of the planning process on the noise environment with regard to human health, flora, fauna and the built environment. The other team members are Bernard Berry, Director of Berry Environmental Ltd, who has conducted research for both Defra and the World Health Organization, and Dr Graham Wood, Reader in Environmental Assessment and Management at Oxford Brookes University and Co-Director of their Impact Assessment Unit.

The study will investigate the effectiveness of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process in dealing with noise impacts<sup>1</sup>. It will consider both the Environmental Statement (ES) itself and the outcome of the process, i.e. after the development has been implemented. For the ES stage the project will assess both the technical quality of the noise section and whether the impacts are described sufficiently clearly for the benefit of those who might be affected.

Where developments have been completed the study will review how well the noise impacts were predicted, whether any mitigation offered or imposed has achieved its objective, and whether there are any unexpected noise issues e.g. leading to complaints.

EIA procedures in other EU member states will also be compared to the UK process and any possible transferable benefits identified. Finally, consideration will be given to any effects that noise action planning under the terms of the European Noise Directive might have on the current planning process as regards noise.

Since the study encompasses the outcome (in noise terms) of completed developments, **the team would be interested to hear of specific examples where the operating phase with regard to the noise impact has proved to be either successful or problematic.** Observations or case studies relating to other EU member states would also be of interest. Please contact Stuart Dryden at Rupert Taylor ([smd@ruperttaylor.com](mailto:smd@ruperttaylor.com)), +44 (0)1993 852 347).

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<sup>1</sup> The study is solely concerned with airborne noise and does not cover vibration-induced effects.

#### 4. The Planning Act and Environmental Assessment

The UK's Planning Act 2008, which brings in a new process for the strategic and project planning of major infrastructure developments (mainly in England), gained royal ascent on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The changes implemented by the Act were initially raised by the Barker Review of Land Use Planning in 2006 and have been developed through the Planning White Paper and Planning Bill over the past 2 years. The Branch provided joint consultation responses with IEMA on all stages of the Act's development, which can be viewed on the Branch webpage: [www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354](http://www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354)

The Planning Act 2008 can be found at:  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/pdf/ukpga\\_20080029\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/pdf/ukpga_20080029_en.pdf)

The most important factors for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) professionals relate to the development of National Policy Statements, which will establish the need case and potentially the preferred location of new Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). The National Policy Statements will be produced by their sponsoring Government Department (e.g. DECC, DfT, Defra, CLG). All such statements will be required to undergo an Appraisal of Sustainability before they can be adopted; however, the Act provides no indication as to whether this appraisal will need to comply with the SEA Directive. The most relevant part of the Act to look at for those wanting more information on National Policy Statements is Part 2, Sections 5 – 13 (Section 5 (3) sets out the Appraisal of Sustainability requirements).

A few minor amendments, included in Part 9, are likely to influence SEA (via Sustainability Appraisal) at the regional and local level. These mainly relate to direct reference to Climate Change policies in Regional Spatial Strategies and Development Plan Documents; the Act also adds a requirement to consider 'the desirability of achieving good design' in considering sustainable developments. These changes are set out in Section 182 and 183 respectively. It is unclear whether changes to remove the mandatory requirement for a Sustainability Appraisal of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were included in the Act as had been expected, having been highlighted in the Planning White Paper.

For the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) professional, the way EIA relates to NSIP applications will be key. There is no direct reference to EIA in the Act; however, related Regulations are being developed in relation to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC). There are a few Sections of the Act that are worth closer inspection on EIA grounds relating to:

- Section 14 sets out the types of infrastructure that the IPC will be responsible for. The subsequent Sections of Part 3 of the Act provide detail on each development type; however, rather unhelpfully these do not always align to the criteria established in Schedules I and II of the EIA Regulations.
- Section 37 where the IPC has the power to set guidance (4) and standards (5) for documents accompanying a NSIP application. As such the IPC could, if appropriately skilled and staffed in EIA, define the scope and set standards for the presentation of an Environmental Statement (ES).
- Sections 47 and 48 require the local community to be consulted and the NSIP application to be publicised. Further, Section 49 requires the proponent of the NSIP to take account of consultation responses.
- Section 60 sets out information about Local Impact Reports, which each affected local authority can submit to the IPC related to a proposed NSIP.

There is a significant lack of clarity about how such documents relate to and interact with the ES prepared by the NSIP proponent, or what happens if the documents disagree on a particular impact.

- Section 104 is crucial regarding the role of EIA in providing effective environmental information to allow the IPC to make a decision on each application. The ES is likely to provide information relevant to sub-sections (4) – (8), which set out the only reasons the IPC can turn down a NSIP application that is in accordance with any relevant National Policy Statement.

There is still much work to be done to ensure an effective EIA system operates for NSIP applications to the IPC. Not least the EIA knowledge and related staffing levels within the IPC will be essential to making the process effective. Work is on-going with Government to try to ensure a robust and efficient process is implemented.

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## **5. Ecotowns Consultation: Draft PPS and SA/HRA**

In November 2008, the UK Government issued a draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on Eco-Towns in England. This which defines what constitutes an eco-town; what environmental, social, and economic standards these developments should achieve; and how eco-towns relate to the planning system. The draft PPS was accompanied by a high level Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report (incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directives) by Scott Wilson, which assessed the 15 potential Ecotowns locations shortlisted in April 2008.

As a judicial review has been granted to opponents of one of the Ecotown proposals, and will be heard in January 2009, the consultation period has also now been extended to **6 March 2009**. See:

[www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/ppsecotowns/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/ppsecotowns/)

## **6. EU Review of EIA and SEA Directives**

As stated in IAIA's January 2009 newsletter, the European Commission recently commissioned a study of the implementation and effectiveness of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directives. The study aims to support a review and update of the Directives, with the potential for merging both into a single Directive. Currently the Commission is evaluating the final study's text, and it is expected that the study will be published March/April 2009. The study is the latest 5 year review of the EIA Directive and the first concerning SEA.

## **7. SEA Training Opportunities in the UK**

In December 2008, the UK's Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) provided a downloadable list of UK training opportunities in the SEA sector, including courses scheduled for 2009 (see also 'Other Events' below) and others that are run on demand. The list may not identify every SEA training course nor should it be viewed as an endorsement of the course on offer. See:

[www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/seatrainingopportunities.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/seatrainingopportunities.pdf)

## **8. Scotland and Northern Ireland Conference on Strategic Environmental Assessment: Getting Better Value from SEA**

"Getting better value" was a theme at the heart of the Scotland and Northern Ireland Conference on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The one-day conference explored SEA in the context of the sustainability agenda of Scottish local government and in terms of SEA's ability to add value and efficiency to the planning system. Held in Glasgow on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 it was part of the wider involvement of the David Livingstone Centre for Sustainability (DLCS), University of Strathclyde, in policy related research, teaching and consultancy.

The requirement to carry out SEA as part of the plan-making process is relatively new and Northern Ireland's application of the SEA Directive is different from that of Scotland. The conference, therefore, provided a valuable opportunity to find out more about the similarities and differences in the experiences of Scotland and Northern Ireland with respect to SEA implementation. Many SEA events focus on the practice of carrying out SEA. This conference stepped back from the mechanics of the process to examine the reasons and aspirations behind SEA, as well as the consequences of not meeting the requirements of the legislation.

The conference was organised by Doctoral Researcher Anna McLauchlan and chaired by Senior Lecturer Dr Elsa João (IAIA Ireland-UK Branch committee member 2006-08), both of DLCS. The conference was attended by 112 delegates from central government, local government, environmental consultancies, non-governmental organisations and academia. The PhD studentship associated with this conference was sponsored by the Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Conference presentations and a conference report is available from [www.ce.strath.ac.uk/sea](http://www.ce.strath.ac.uk/sea)

*Rebecca Bell, Sustainability Officer for Clackmannanshire Council, and former student of the Graduate School of Environmental Studies (now DLCS). For her MSc dissertation she carried out research on public participation in SEA.*

## **9. All-Ireland Health and Wellbeing Data Set Released**

In August 2008, Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory (INISPHO) released two new data sets:

- The interim release of the Irish Health Poverty Index (iHPI); and
- The All-Ireland Health and Social Care Indicator Set (AIHSC).

In December 2008, the iHPI was completed and the iHPI and the AIHSC, along with additional demographic and socio-economic indicators, have been incorporated into one combined dataset, the All-Ireland Health and Wellbeing Data Set (AIHWDS). Users will now be able to compare indicators from different indicator sets and get more comprehensive profiles of a particular area. See [www.publichealth.ie/news](http://www.publichealth.ie/news)

## **10. Planning Reform in Scotland**

A wide-ranging package of improvements intended to make Scotland's planning system leaner and fitter were announced in October 2008 by the Scottish Government. As part of these initiatives, the Scottish Government is streamlining over 20 separate Scottish planning policies into one document. The first two

parts, which cover core principles and the key elements of the planning system, have been published. The third, a statement of policy on a number of development themes, is due to be published in spring 2009.

Other measures announced include setting up a dedicated unit to support the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment of development plans in order to develop skills and improve performance of spatial planning in Scotland.

See [www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/10/28100001](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/10/28100001) and [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/05100742/0](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/05100742/0)

## **11. Cumulative Environmental Impacts of Wind Farms**

A report by Entec UK for the UK's Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), has warned that fresh guidance is needed on the assessment of the cumulative impacts of onshore wind farms. BERR commissioned the consultancy to establish what guidance exists on quantifying the overall effect of wind turbines, as required in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), to identify gaps in the existing guidance and to target the requirements of new guidance to address these. Entec reviewed the literature and surveyed practitioners in government, private consultancies and organisations such as the RSPB.

The report, 'Review of Guidance on the Assessment of Cumulative Impacts of Onshore Windfarms' (September 2008) indicate that whilst the cumulative impact assessment process is currently performing adequately there are considered to be opportunities to further improve guidance for practitioners in order to enhance the efficiency of the planning process. It is understood that progression to Phase 2 of the project, the production of guidance notes where deemed necessary, is currently under discussion.

See [www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/energy/markets/consents/page22743.html](http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/energy/markets/consents/page22743.html)

## **12. Scottish Guidance on Wind Farm Planning**

In November 2008, the Scottish Government issued Planning Advice Note PAN 45: Annex 2: Spatial Frameworks and Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Farms. The new Annex 2 (PAN 45: Renewable Energy Technologies having been issued in 2002) gives advice to planning authorities on the preparation of supplementary planning guidance for wind farms, in particular spatial frameworks for wind farms of over 20 MW capacity. This is intended to help councils apply Scottish Planning Policy 6, which requires local authorities to prepare spatial frameworks guiding wind farm developments.

The Annex indicates that planning authorities may benefit from joint working on supplementary guidance for windfarm siting, which may require SEA, particularly where issues of cumulative impact, designated areas and recreational value cross administrative boundaries.

See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/12125039/0>

## **13. Scotland & Northern Ireland Launch SEAs for Offshore Renewables**

In October 2008, the Scottish Government announced that offshore wind energy in Scottish territorial waters is to undergo strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to establish a clear and consistent approach to future development. The move follows a strong response from developers to The Crown Estate's call for applications for offshore wind developments within Scottish territorial waters earlier in 2008. The Scottish Government will prioritise completion of the

Strategic Environmental Assessment within one year, which will run alongside The Crown Estate's evaluation of applications. See:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/10/29112030](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/10/29112030)

In December 2008, Northern Ireland's Energy Minister also commissioned the SEA of offshore wind and marine renewables in Northern Ireland waters, which is expected to be completed in early 2010, including public consultation phases. Northern Ireland's current renewable energy target is 12% of electricity consumption to be met from indigenous renewable resources by 2012; of this 12%, 15% is to be from non-wind resources. See:

[www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-deti-021208-northern-ireland\\_s-offshore](http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-deti-021208-northern-ireland_s-offshore)

#### **14. Marine and Coastal Access Bill**

The UK Government has introduced a Bill to provide for marine functions and activities, including the establishment of a marine spatial planning system. See:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/marineandcoastalaccess.html>

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/legislation/key-docs.htm>

#### **15. SEAs of Scotland's Climate Change Bill, Marine Bill and Strategic Transport Projects Review**

In December 2008, the Scottish Government published its Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Statements about its consultation proposals for a Scottish Climate Change Bill and a Scottish Marine Bill. See:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/12/03145652/0>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/12/08085633/0>

Also announced in December, the Scottish Government has undertaken a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), and welcome comments on the Environmental Report.

See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/12/environmental-assessment>

#### **16. CABI Launches 'Environmental Impact'**

CABI, an international organisation providing scientific expertise, knowledge and information, has launched a new online resource – 'Environmental Impact' – which represents a single, comprehensive and authoritative source of information on the effects of climate change on the terrestrial and freshwater biosphere. It also incorporates resources on other aspects of man's influence on the environment, including pollution, deforestation, desertification and habitat loss.

See [www.cabi.org/environmentalimpact/](http://www.cabi.org/environmentalimpact/).

#### 4. OTHER EVENTS:

##### **EIA One-day courses:**

- EIA Principles and Practice  
**12 January 2009**
- Environmental Statement Preparation and Review  
**16 February 2009**
- EIA Project Management  
**23 February 2009**

For further details contact: ADH Training & Consulting Ltd., Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire: [Shirley@adhtrain-consult.co.uk](mailto:Shirley@adhtrain-consult.co.uk) 01608 663217,

##### **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal**

**13-14 January 2009**, Department of Planning, Oxford Brookes University.

A linked two-day course designed for planners and their consultants, statutory consultees, planning inspectors, academics and others involved in SEA/SAs. Day 1 provides an introduction to the legal requirements and a quick overview of the SA and SEA processes. Day 2 goes into more depth on complex issues of site appraisal, quantification, cumulative impact assessment, and appropriate assessment. See: [www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/calendar.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/calendar.html)

##### **EIA - A Planner's Guide to Writing, Reading and Assessing EIAs:**

**14 January 2009**, 18:00 - 20:30, Nottingham.

East Midlands Young Planners, the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) and Rushcliffe Borough Council: Presentation by Josh Fothergill, Senior Environmental Advisor at the IEMA.

See: [www.rtpi.org.uk/ct/EVENT/649/11/events/649](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/ct/EVENT/649/11/events/649)

##### **CIRIA Training, Environmental Good Practice on Site**

**14 January 2009**, London

[www.ciria.org/workshop\\_140109.htm](http://www.ciria.org/workshop_140109.htm)

##### **Environmental Legal Forum 2009 - The Way We Live Now: An Energy and Planning Conference for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**20 January 2009**, York

Joint event organised by UK Environmental Law Association (UKELA), Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), and Denison Till.

See: [www.ukela.org/](http://www.ukela.org/) & [www.iema.net/legal](http://www.iema.net/legal)

##### **Thinking & Acting Sustainably: Profile of a 21st Century Professional:**

###### **PP4SD Workshop**

**21 January 2009**, London.

This one day Professional Practice for Sustainable Development (PP4SD) workshop will bring together professionals from different areas to engage in practical activities and dialogue on sustainability and sustainable development.

See: [www.ies-uk.org.uk/events/events.php](http://www.ies-uk.org.uk/events/events.php)

##### **Beyond boundaries - protected landscapes, cities and the European Landscape Convention**

**27 January 2009**, London

Europarc Atlantic Isles (EAI) Seminar Series: aimed at advancing the application of the European Landscape Convention by Protected Landscape organisations which border major conurbations and interact with them.

See: [www.ieem.net/docs/London%20flyer.pdf](http://www.ieem.net/docs/London%20flyer.pdf) & [www.europarc-ai.org/](http://www.europarc-ai.org/)

**IEMA Environmental Knowledge Transfer****28 January 2009**, Oxford

The IEMA's Environmental Knowledge Transfer, in association with the Environmental Knowledge Transfer Network, is a free event which brings together academics and practitioners from the environmental field to discuss cutting edge research that deals with specific issues in the management of environmental problems. See: [www.iema.net/conferences/knowledgeexchange](http://www.iema.net/conferences/knowledgeexchange)

**Cruise Tourism and Regeneration****3 February 2009**, Dundee, 3.30pm

University of Dundee Research Seminar, Town and Regional Planning, School of Social and Environmental Sciences, by John McCarthy, Reader in Urban Studies, Heriot-Watt University. Please contact Tony Jackson, University of Dundee for further information: [a.a.jackson@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:a.a.jackson@dundee.ac.uk)

**Health Impact Assessment Training****9-11 February 2009**, Newry

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland is calling for applications for its 7th comprehensive HIA training course. Upon completion of the course further HIA support and networking opportunities will be available through the Institute. Further information and application forms can be accessed at [www.publichealth.ie/ireland/hiatraining/comprehensivehiatrainingcourse](http://www.publichealth.ie/ireland/hiatraining/comprehensivehiatrainingcourse) and should be returned by **Friday 9 January 2009**.

**CMS/CIWEM Conference: Water Framework Directive - River Basin Management Plans: Responding to the Consultation****11 February 2009**, London

The aim of this Coastal Management for Sustainability (CMS)/ Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) conference is to enable a wide cross-section of stakeholders to understand and explore the recently issued River Basin Management Plans to help them to respond effectively to the consultation. See: [www.ciwem.org/events](http://www.ciwem.org/events)

**Local Environmental Quality in a Low Carbon Age****18 February 2009**, LondonSee: [www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events/details/?id=1714](http://www.environmental-protection.org.uk/events/details/?id=1714)**Ecological Survey & Impact Assessment: IEEM Workshops****25 February 2009:**

- Surveying for Bats and Development (SE England)
- Badgers: Survey, Exclusions and Mitigation (Scotland)

See: [www.ieem.org.uk/](http://www.ieem.org.uk/) > Workshops**Climate Change Adaptation: Drivers, Barriers and Strategy****3-4 March 2009**, London

Imperial College London and Collingwood Environmental Planning present a two day training programme to provide in-depth and practical knowledge of policy and practice relating to climate change adaptation and how to plan an effective strategic response.

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/cpd/courses/subject/environmental/adaptation>**CIWEM/CLG Conference: Water and Planning: Planning Guidance for Water Issues in Sustainable Development****24 March 2009**, LondonSee: [www.ciwem.org/events](http://www.ciwem.org/events)



**IEMA: Environmental Assessment Training  
from March 2009**

- An Introduction to EIA – Nottingham (**March**), London (**September**).
- An Introduction to SEA – Nottingham (**March**), London (**September**).
- Implementing the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in EIA – Glasgow (**March**), London (**July**).
- The Importance of Strategic Environmental Assessment – London (**April**), Birmingham (**October**).
- Carrying out effective EIA Reviews – London (**May**), Birmingham (**October**).
- Guiding You Through the Screening and Scoping Process for EIA - London (**June**), Edinburgh (**October**).

For all enquiries please contact [training@iema.net](mailto:training@iema.net); further details of these CPD workshops will shortly be available at: <http://www.iema.net>

**RTPI Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal  
Masterclass**

**2 April & 21 October 2009**, London:

This one-day masterclass aims to explain how to fulfil latest legal requirements, and how to use the SEA/ SA process to help improve plans. See [www.rtpiconferences.co.uk/rtpi/event.php?product=2079&type=public](http://www.rtpiconferences.co.uk/rtpi/event.php?product=2079&type=public)

**Landscape Character Assessment**

**22 April 2009**, Losehill Hall, Peak District

[www.landscapeinstitute.org/news\\_and\\_events/events/events/2009/04/22/Landscape\\_Character\\_Assessment/](http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/news_and_events/events/events/2009/04/22/Landscape_Character_Assessment/)

**Great Places, Great Cities – Public Space and Sustainable Cities**

**4– 5 June 2009**, Glasgow

[www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/default.asp?page=466](http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/default.asp?page=466)

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual Transatlantic Studies Association Conference**

**13-16 July 2009**, Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, Kent.

Please contact Tony Jackson, University of Dundee for further information:

[a.a.jackson@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:a.a.jackson@dundee.ac.uk)

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***This newsletter is for members of the IAIA within the Ireland & United Kingdom 'region', who automatically become members of the Ireland-UK Branch on joining.***

Adam Boyden

Chair, IAIA Ireland-UK Branch Committee 2006-08

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