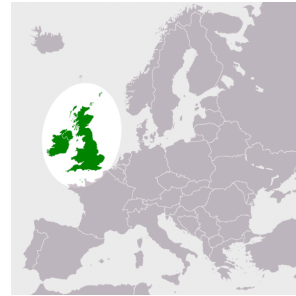


Branch of theInternational Association
for Impact Assessment

IMPACT ASSESSMENT UPDATE

IRELAND-UK BRANCH OF IAIA:

**July 2009
Newsletter**

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 for full details of membership services and benefits.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Members,

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

Since the December 2008/January 2009 newsletter, emails have been sent to members on:

- Recommended SEA/SA and HRA Reports
- Health Impact Assessment Training
- ESRC Studentship at University of Liverpool
- Retrospective Biodiversity Impact Assessment
- IEMA National Environmental Assessment Forum, April 2009
- Branch committee meeting, April 2009
- Elections for the next Branch organising committee 2009-10
- Election results
- New Chair of the Branch
- Summary of IAIA Branch Committee Meeting, and RSPB Opportunity
- IEMA Free EIA Workshops June/July 2009
- Summary of Branch activity, May 2009
- Update on IAIA09 Ghana (from John Fry)
- Collingwood Environmental Planning & Imperial College London: Strategic Environmental Assessment in Practice 3 day training course

For the next Branch newsletter, please email any contributions to 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.

IAIA Events

- **IAIA '10: Geneva: 6-11 April 2010**

The international conference comes to Europe once more. Please note that the deadline for submission of proposals for sessions, and paper/poster abstracts, is **31 August 2009**. Put this one in your diary – we hope for a good delegation from Ireland & the UK! A Preliminary programme and presentation materials will be available from October. See <http://www.iaia.org/iaia10/>

IAIA Cumulative Effects Meeting Update

The online proceedings page for the November 2008 Cumulative Effects meeting in Calgary is now available at <http://iaia.org/iaia08calgary>.

Josh Fothergill or John Fry might remember enough of the meeting to be able to comment on any queries prompted by those proceedings – so please email in your queries to ie_uk@iaia.org!

IAIA Newsletters

The **January and April (and shortly July) 2009** IAIA newsletters are available for members to login and download at www.iaia.org > login > Publications > Newsletter Members.

The Ireland-UK Branch of IAIA

For those based in Ireland and the UK, membership of IAIA comes with the added value of automatic membership of the **Ireland-UK Branch**. This regional Branch was created in 2005, with the aim of promoting interactions among and between professionals in the field and impact assessment researchers at leading Irish and UK universities.

The existence of the Branch provides further 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 and follow > Affiliates and Branches > Ireland-UK Branch (www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354).

An annual summary of Branch activities is also made at the meeting of Affiliates and Branches section during the IAIA annual conference, most recently at IAIA09 in Accra.

2. BRANCH NEWS

Elections to Branch committee, and a new Chair

A new Branch organising committee of 10 members was elected by the Branch membership in January/February 2009, through a ballot overseen by IAIA past-President Dr Ross Marshall. John Fry announced the result to members by email on 12 February 2009. The new committee includes: **Mariam Ali** (RSPB), **Adam Boyden** (Nicholas Pearson Associates, Bath), **Martin Broderick** (Golders, Oxford), **Josh Fothergill** (IEMA), **Debra Fox** (University of Liverpool), **John Fry** (UCD, Ireland), **Ainhoa Gonzalez** (Girobi/DIT/Trinity College Dublin, Ireland), **Richard Hook** (Environ, London), **Iain Hossack** (N Ayrshire Council, Scotland), and **Natasha Madeira** (EnviroCentre, Glasgow).

On 30 April the Branch committee held its first meeting, which was well-attended both in person and by conference call, at which priorities for action and responsibilities were agreed for the next year. **Josh Fothergill** was unanimously agreed as the new Chair of the Branch committee. Others agreed to take on other important roles as follows:

- Events Coordinator: **Martin Broderick**
- Branch Secretary: **Mariam Ali**
- Treasurer and Newsletter Author: **Adam Boyden**

The new Branch committee will be in touch with members on a regular basis of issues of interest. Thanks to all who voted and stood for election!

Branch event: Climate Change and Impact Assessment, 8 October 2009

The Branch and Met Office are running a full day event on climate change adaptation and impact assessment, to be held at the Met Office headquarters on Thursday **8 October 2009**. Further details of this event will be circulated to members when available shortly.

IAIA '09 annual conference: Accra, Ghana, 16-22 May 2009

With 17 delegates attending from Ireland and the UK, including John Fry and Debra Fox on behalf of the new Branch committee, some of you will have firsthand experience of the conference. John's experience of the conference was the subject of an email on 28th May! Debra gave a presentation on the status of the Ireland-UK Branch to the Affiliates session (now being run as an open presentation session, rather than as a committee meeting format) and presents her account below:



'This years IAIA conference was held in Accra, Ghana. It attracted an international audience of over 500 people brought together under a common theme 'Impact Assessment and Human Well-Being.' The conference was packed with diverse, interesting and challenging topics (and people!).

As always happens at such big events, choosing which sessions to go to was difficult. Papers covered theoretical and practical advances in impact assessment, and importantly the political struggles faced by some in promoting social and environmental wellbeing over economic expedience. These echoed a keynote speakers' belief that "destruction of the environment is the destruction of the self."

The IAIA Affiliates forum brought together 8 IAIA networks and provided an opportunity to hear what others were doing to support professional practice. Given the size of the Ireland and UK Branch we certainly punch above our weight!

The Ghanaian Adinkra symbolises the 'Unity and Human Relations'. This was my first IAIA conference and I certainly felt part of a community with a common mission to promote human and planetary health and wellbeing. The conference was a great opportunity to network, share learning and make new friends. Next years conference is a little nearer to home and I heartily recommend and look forward to attending my 2nd IAIA conference in Geneva.'

Debra Fox, Dept of Civic Design, University of Liverpool

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.

Recent publications

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

- Becker, E., M. Broderick, and D. Collier, 2009. *Uranium Exploration and Mining – Radiological Implications*. Securing the Future and 8th ICARD, June 23-26, Skelleftea, Sweden.
- Butcher, T., M. Broderick, P. Beauvais and M. Tan, 2009. *Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental & Social Impact Assessments (ESIA) in the Mining Sector – Expecting the Unexpected*. Mining Environmental Management, July.
- Carroll, B., and T. Turpin, 2009, with A. Boyden, A. Carroll and R. Thomas, *Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook: A practical guide for planners, developers and communities, 2nd edition*. Thomas Telford, London.
- Fischer, T., 2009. *Reviewing the quality of strategic environmental assessment reports for English spatial plan core strategies*. [Environmental Impact Assessment Review](#), Article in press, May.
- Jha-Thakur, U., T. Fischer and A. Rajvanshi, 2009. *Reviewing design stage of environmental impact assessment follow-up: looking at the open cast coal mines in India*. [Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal](#), Volume 27, Number 1, March, pp.33-44.
- Lawrence, P., 2009. *Equator Principles: or how I learned to stop worrying and love sustainability*. [Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal](#), Volume 27, Number 1, March, pp.3-6.
- IEMA, 2008. Practitioner Best Practice Series, volume 12, December 2008: Environmental Management Plans.

3. IMPACT ASSESSMENT NEWS

1. East of England Plan successfully challenged on Strategic Environmental Assessment failings

In May 2009, in response to a challenge by both Hertfordshire County Council and St Alban's District Council, the High Court ruled that the East of England Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England region), was flawed and must be quashed and reconsidered, in relation to proposed development at Hemel Hempstead, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield.

The three towns in Hertfordshire are identified as 'key centres for development and change' in the East of England Plan, published by the UK Government in May 2008. The Court ruled that alternatives to housing that will impact on green field sites and the Green Belt had not been properly considered before the RSS was adopted, and that the Government had failed to comply with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Regulations that required reasonable alternatives to be evaluated. The basis of the challenge was that the decision on the RSS requiring significant additional housing by releasing land from the Green Belt was reached without a lawful SEA, which would have considered the reasonable alternatives to the proposals which could have led to different allocations within the RSS. The Court rejected a similar challenge related to Harlow, as in that case there had been adequate strategic environmental assessment which 'adequately described the impacts of development'.

As the case is the first legal challenge to a RSS relating to the application of SEA, the Court's decision has implications for other RSS across the country as well as local development framework documents and SEA practice in general. Indeed, the adoption of the RSS for the South West of England has been delayed as a result. It is also understood that the Secretary of State for Communities is considering appealing the ruling, as are Hertfordshire County Council (in relation to Harlow).

See: www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1115316685176.html and <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2009/1280.html>

2. Planning Act 2008, England: Pre-application Consultation and Application Procedures for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

In March 2009, the UK Government's Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) published a consultation paper on a suite of draft regulations and guidance documents which set out draft procedures for pre-application consultations on nationally significant infrastructure projects, and information that applications submitted to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) for such projects (such as major new power stations, airport expansions, and reservoirs) should contain. The IPC, to be led by Sir Michael Pitt, is being established under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008 and will examine and give development consent to planning applications for such projects. The consultation includes procedures and draft regulations for both Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA). See:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/planningandbuilding/consultation/preapplication>

3. IEMA and RTPI team up to jointly respond on application process and EIA for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP)

In March 2009, the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) launched a Position Statement on the EIA process to be applied to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consented via the Infrastructure Planning Commission (see above). IEMA's original Position Statement can be found at:

<http://www.iema.net/news?aid=18761>

During May 2009, IEMA were invited to attend a key stakeholders meeting on the consultation (above) and put forward their views on the need to enhance the coverage of EIA within the pre-application guidance. Following the meeting IEMA and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) found they held similar views on the way to improve the pre-application and application process for NSIP applications and decided to produce a joint consultation response. This response specifically called for the merging of the draft Application regulations and the draft NSIP EIA regulations, to ensure EIA was built into the NSIP application process, rather than being bolted on to it. The consultation response can be downloaded from:

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/6457/090619-jointIEMA-RTPIresponse-CLG NSIP Preapp App consult.pdf>

The previous Branch **Dec 2008/Jan 2009** newsletter included an article on the Planning Act 2008 and Environmental Assessment. The Planning Act 2008 can be found at:

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/pdf/ukpga_20080029_en.pdf

Josh Fothergill, Senior Environmental Advisor, IEMA
j.fothergill@iema.net

4. EIA case law update 1: Screening: Reasons for not requiring EIA

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) provided its formal verdict on the *Mellor v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* case on 30 April 2009. This relates to the need to provide the public with reasons for giving negative EIA screening decisions (Screening Opinions and Directions that do not require EIA).

The case involved the Secretary of State's Screening Direction decision not to require EIA for a proposed medium-security psychiatric hospital at the former Royal Navy base HMS Forest Moor, located within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). That decision was challenged in the ECJ by local objectors, led by Christopher Mellor, who maintained that an EIA should be carried out in order to protect the AONB and that the Communities Secretary failed to give adequate reasons for the decision not to seek an EIA (see the February 2008 Branch newsletter).

The ECJ's ruling found that whilst negative screening decisions do not need to include the reasons why EIA was not required, these reasons must be made publicly available if anyone requests them. See:

<http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2009/1280.html>

5. EIA case law update 2: Screening: Cumulative effects of changes or extensions to development

In February 2009, the Administrative Court gave its decision in the case of *R (Louisa Baker) v. Bath & North East Somerset Council*, which relates to how the Town & Country Planning (EIA) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended) cover proposed extensions or changes to existing developments. The judgment found that the current EIA regulations do not meet the requirements of the EIA Directive, because they limit the application of the exclusive EIA screening thresholds and criteria to the extent of the proposed extension on its own, and not to the development as changed or extended.

Also, whilst the EIA Regulations do allow, in Regulation 4(8), the Secretary of State (SoS) to require any development in Schedule 2 to require EIA, the regulations fail to transpose Article 10A of the EIA Directive as they fail to clearly highlight to members of the public their right to request that the SoS makes a screening determination if they are concerned about the potential environmental impacts of a project.

See <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2009/595.html>

6. GISEA Manual – Current Practice and Potential on the Application of GIS as a Support Tool in SEA of Irish Land Use Plans

Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has launched a GISEA Manual on the application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as an assessment and support tool in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes. It applies to land use planning in particular – within the planning context of the Republic of Ireland, but it can be equally valid for other spatial plans and programmes (such as those related to the Water Framework Directive).

The Consultation Draft of the GISEA Manual was issued in April 2009 for consultation, for a period extended to 30th June 2009. Although the consultation period is over, the EPA and the author welcome any comments, observations and/or suggestions on the Draft Manual that may contribute to its betterment. It can be downloaded from the EPA's website: www.epa.ie; (direct URL link:

http://www.epa.ie/downloads/consultation/2Consultation%20Draft_GISEAManual%20for%20Website.pdf).

Please forward any feedback you may have to Tadhg O'Mahony, SEA Section, Office of Environmental Assessment, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, County Cork. Comments can also be forwarded electronically to t.omahony@epa.ie quoting "GISEA Manual" in the subject line.

*Ainhoa Gonzalez, Girobi Environmental Services/ Dublin Institute of Technology
[Ainhoa has just been appointed as a Post-Doctoral Researcher at Trinity College Dublin]*

7. European research into Spatial Data for Environmental Assessment

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre is conducting research into the use of spatial data for the preparation of EIA and SEA reports (including Sustainability Appraisal). The study is part of a project called Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). The researchers want to hear from those involved in the EIA and SEA/SA process, particularly if you have views on data availability and usage. The JRC are currently running an online survey, which is open until the **end of July 2009**. As part of the research a number of practitioners will also be contacted directly, outside of this survey to gather their views directly. If you have views on data in environmental assessment why not complete the questionnaire by visiting:

<http://sdi-survey.jrc.ec.europa.eu/limesurvey/index.php?sid=85881>

8. HIA Review Package Published

'I am very pleased to tell you about a review package for HIA that Mette Winge Fredsgaard, Alan Bond, and I have just published. The review package is intended to enable a commissioner or reviewer of an HIA report to reach an opinion as to the quality of the completed report in a simple, quick and systematic manner.

We have focused on developing this package for HIA reports which are submitted as evidence associated with an application for development consent. We see the users of this review package as being commissioners of HIA both in the public and private sector and those who may be asked to review HIA reports. Experience gained through using the review package will be essential to ensure that it covers all that it should, and that it continues to promote best practice in HIA.

The package is available on either www.hiagateway.org.uk or www.bcahealth.co.uk. We are very interested to receive comments on this review package. Please send comments to hiareview@bcahealth.co.uk.'

Ben Cave, Ben Cave Associates Ltd. Ben.cave@bcahealth.co.uk

9. North West Health Impact Assessment Capacity Building Programme

A new health impact assessment capacity building programme has commenced in the north west of England. According to a recent report¹ public health leadership across the North West of England is already stretched and there is inadequate capacity to meet the increasing demand for HIA skills. The North West Health Impact Assessment Capacity Building Programme, funded by the NHS North West for a period of two years, aims to increase capacity for HIA and help create a culture whereby the potential health effects of policies and activities are routinely and systematically considered by public sector organisations and their partners. The programme is a partnership between the North West Public Health Observatory, who are hosting and responsible for project management, and the International Health Impact Assessment Consortium (IMPACT) who are jointly responsible for the development and delivery of the programme.

Details of the project can be found on the project website launched on 22 April 2009 (www.nwhia.org.uk).

The project will focus on five dimensions of capacity building; workforce and organisational development, leadership, partnership and resources. A baseline assessment is being undertaken to identify current HIA capacity and capability in the region using an online survey tool (launched **1st June 2009**), and the results of this will be used to develop an HIA training and development strategy. For further information please contact the Project Administrator on 0151 231 8146.

¹ Fox, D., (2007) Putting health into impact assessment: a North West regional scoping study. Department of Civic Design, University of Liverpool.

Debra Fox, University of Liverpool

10. How planning can promote better health

The Royal Town Planning Institute has published a good practice guide setting out how planning can help promote public health and tackle health inequalities. The guide stresses the importance of access to green space, minimising car use and promoting access to fresh food. See: http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/6443/GPN5_final.pdf

11. Environment Agency's SEA Environmental Reports for the River Basin Management Plans (England and Wales)

The Water Framework Directive requires the production of River Basin Management Plans across the UK (see Dec 2008/Jan 2009 Branch newsletter). These plans require assessment under the SEA Directive to identify the significant effects on the environment, with the publication of Environmental Reports. The Environmental Reports for each RBMP present the methodology we used in the SEA, an explanation of how environmental factors have been considered within the decision-making, and the results and conclusions of the SEA process. The Environmental Reports for each RBMP can be found here <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/consultations/101718.aspx>

12. Planning and Health: Health Committee - Third Report: Health Inequalities

In November 2008, the UK Government's Department of Health commissioned Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Chairman of the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH), to advise the Secretary of State on the future development of a health inequalities strategy post 2010, both for the short to medium term, and the long term. The WHO Commission recognised the significance of the built environment on health and health inequalities stating: "*Communities and neighbourhoods that ensure access to basic goods, that are socially cohesive, that are designed to promote good physical and psychological wellbeing, and that are protective of the natural environment are essential for health equity*". The committee has now published their report. The main conclusions in relation to planning are:

"342. In our view, health must be a primary consideration in every planning decision that is taken, and to ensure that this happens, we recommend that

- in collaboration with the Department of Health, DCLG should publish a Planning Policy Statement on health; this Statement should require the planning system to create a built environment that encourages a healthy lifestyle, including giving local authorities the powers to control the numbers of fast food outlets.
- PCTs should be made statutory consultees for local planning decisions; PCTs, for their part, need to ensure they have the knowledge of cost effectiveness of alternative policies and resources to make an informed contribution to such decisions.

343. We recommend that the Government increase the proportion of the transport budget currently spent on walking and cycling."

The chapter on planning and health is online at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhealth/286/28610.htm#a80>

The full report can be accessed at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhealth/286/28602.htm>

Debra Fox, University of Liverpool

13. Floods and Water Management Bill: Sustainable drainage schemes to be mandatory for new developments in England and Wales

The UK Government has indicated that within two years, sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) will be required from all new developments, as part of the Draft Flooding and Water Management Bill, published in April 2009 and now out for consultation. Under such a requirement, the Government will publish new national standards for the construction and operation of surface water drainage for developments. Developers will have to demonstrate they have met these standards before they can connect residual surface water drainage to a public sewer, and the standards will become a material consideration in local authority planning decisions. Under these plans SUDS will be adopted and maintained by local authorities in England and Wales. Much of the draft legislation is in response to Sir Michael Pitt's review of the floods in England in summer 2007. The draft Bill confirmed the Environment Agency's new strategic overview role in respect of flooding, a status which means that it will be a statutory consultee on planning applications that have any flood implications. In the future this may be extended to include all applications with coastal erosion implications.

The draft Bill also considers whether local authorities should have more power to restrict the paving over of gardens, and to introduce restrictions on land management practices in areas of farmland through the designation of Run-Off Reduction Zones.

See: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1115316678359.html>
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/latest/2009/flood-0421.html>
<http://www.commonleader.gov.uk/output/page2671.asp>

DEFRA are also consulting separately on the implementation of the EU Floods Directive: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/flooding/pdf/supplementary-consultation-floods-directive.pdf>

14. IEMA Workshops to assist IAIA Effectiveness Study Update

IEMA are running a series of **free** EIA Workshops across the UK and Ireland in June and July. These events will provide delegates with an opportunity to feed into the IAIA's second 10-year review of the effectiveness of Environmental Assessment, and to hear about IEMA's plans for this area, and EIA case studies from your region. At the time of writing, places are still available at the following: **16 July: Newcastle**

If you are interested in attending you can book by finding the relevant workshop on IEMA's events webpage: <http://www.iema.net/events>

15. Nominated nuclear power station sites unveiled

In January 2008, in its Nuclear White Paper, the UK Government stated that nuclear power should have a role to play in the UK's future energy mix alongside other low carbon energy sources and that it would take active steps to facilitate the construction of new nuclear power stations. The Government invited nominations for sites for potential new nuclear power stations by 31 March 2009, and the eleven nominated sites were published in April 2009. All but two of the locations are adjacent to existing nuclear industry facilities in England and Wales.

The Government is now undertaking a Strategic Siting Assessment process to identify, from the nominated sites, those which are potentially suitable for the deployment of new nuclear power stations by the end of 2025, by assessing sites against published criteria (see **Branch October 2008 newsletter**). The sites assessed as potentially suitable will be included in a National Policy Statement (NPS), to be published in 2010. Developers

will still need to apply for consent from the future Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) to build on these sites under the new planning regime.

See: <http://www.nuclearpowersiting.decc.gov.uk/>

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1115316676766.html>

16. Responses to UK consultation on transposing the EU INSPIRE Directive on spatial data availability

DEFRA, in conjunction with the devolved administrations for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, carried out a 12 week public consultation from March 2009 into the transposition of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) Directive 2007/2/EC into UK law. In June 2009, a report which analyses the responses to the consultation was published:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/inspire/summary-responses.pdf>

17. Research on Noise and Health in the UK

Two reports for the UK Government examine the links between environmental noise and human health.

A report from an ad hoc group of experts 'Environmental Noise and Health in the UK' has been published by the Health Protection Agency. This responds to increasing public concern about possible adverse effects of noise on health, and confirms a link with raised blood pressure and coronary heart disease. The report is now published for comment until **17 August 2009**:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1246433632961>

DEFRA has also published a report of research 'Estimating Dose-Response Relationships between Noise Exposure and Human Health in the UK', commissioned on behalf of the Interdepartmental Group on Costs and Benefits, to quantify human health impacts of environmental noise, as the first step to monetise the effects of noise. The research aimed to identify the most likely adverse health effects of noise and develop dose-response functions for them, for policy appraisal. Sufficient evidence was found to associate noise with annoyance, cardiovascular effects, sleep disturbance, hearing impairment and the cognitive development of children. See:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/igcb/healthreport.htm>

4. MEMBERS SECTION

Pro-project bias in EIA

'As part of my MA in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Management at the University of Manchester I am undertaking a dissertation investigating pro-project bias in the EIA process and have developed a questionnaire to find out the opinions of those working within EIA in the UK.

Pro-project bias in the EIA process is an issue that has been acknowledged within EIA literature, but at present there is little research on it. Pro-project bias relates to the intentional or unintentional lack of objectivity in the identification, assessment and representation of significant environmental impacts resulting from a proposed project.

The questionnaire is on a website for ease of use and can be found at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=FvtimUi4r2JdQf2snQ6teQ_3d_3d

Your help would be valuable and this also gives you a chance to voice your opinion on the subject (anonymously) so don't feel that you are writing too much. The deadline for replies is **Friday 24th July 2009** but a more immediate response would be appreciated.

Also, if you know of anybody else that would be interested in filling this in send me their details or forward this email on and copy me in.

My email address is christopher.garratt@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

Also feel free to contact me with any questions.'

Chris Garratt, MA student, University of Manchester

Risk in Habitats Regulations Assessments: Is the approach taken by practitioners 'Appropriate'?

A questionnaire was forwarded to all IAIA Branch members on 24 July 2008 from Ben Kite, at that time preparing his Oxford Brookes University MSc Environmental Assessment and Management dissertation, which examined the concepts of risk and required certainty at the various different stages in the HRA process, together with a query for members on the overlaps between EIA and HRA in practice. Ben received a number of responses from members which helped his dissertation, which attained a distinction and also won the Scott Wilson prize for best dissertation on the course! Ben states '*I would like to pass on my appreciation to all those who gave up time to respond to my questionnaire. The information provided was crucial in developing the thrust of this research.*'

The Abstract of Ben's dissertation is as follows:

'The transposition of the European Habitats Directive into UK law in 1994 through the Habitats Regulations introduced new measures for the strict protection of certain European level designated sites for nature conservation, collectively referred to as the "Natura 2000" network. The transposed requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Directive require a strict assessment process known as "Habitats Regulations Assessment" (HRA) to be applied to certain plans and projects that may affect such a site.

The tests inherent within HRA, and in particular the stage known as "Appropriate Assessment" (AA) will only allow plans or project that are likely to contribute to a significant effect on a European site to proceed in exceptional circumstances, and have resulted in the refusals of a large number of plans and projects in the UK. There have also been claims that the severity and inflexibility of the AA stage is resulting in practitioners seeking to avoid it, and that it is leading to adverse effects for biodiversity and the sustainable development agenda because, in addition to plans and projects

avoiding thorough assessment at the AA stage, lower consideration being given to non-European level biodiversity and the overriding of other parts of the sustainable development agenda.

This research initially undertakes a review of secondary sources to set the context, glean and obtain information pertinent to the understanding of the issue, and gain an understanding of the complex legislative concepts and varying interpretations of the severity of the tests set by Article 6 of the Directive, particularly where this relates to the requirement for decision makers to be certain that adverse effects on a European site will not take place. It then engages primary research in the form of a review of 29 planning decisions that have involved the HRA process, and a questionnaire of practitioners involved in the field of HRA.

The results of the research indicate that practitioners and proponents of plans and projects are indeed seeking to avoid the need to undertake an AA, but that, contrary to expectations, this is primarily resulting in positive effects for both biodiversity and the wider environment. Although the potential for negative effects occurring was identified, in general these were outweighed by positive effects, and corrective measures in the form of adjustments to common practice and HRA procedures were suggested to address them.'

Ben, now at Ecological Planning and Research Ltd., can be contacted at ben@epr.uk.com, Tel: 01962 794720

5. OTHER EVENTS

Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU) and West Midlands Public Health Observatory: Training Courses in HIA:

- **July 9 2009:** 1 Day Course: Introduction to HIA at the West Midlands Public Health Observatory, Birmingham:
What is HIA? Benefits of HIA; Context for HIA; Understanding health; Doing an HIA – steps; different levels of HIA; nature and use of evidence in HIA; Stakeholder engagement; Examples of HIA and further information on HIA.
- **September 29 - October 1 2009:** 3 day Residential Course:
'Ready to do HIA' at Gregynog, Nr Newtown, Powys (this assumes participants know what was covered in the 1 day course).

For further information contact:

Chloe Chadderton – whiasu@cardiff.ac.uk 02920 875184 or
Freya.cooper@wmpo.org.uk 0121 4148190

8th 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

IEMA: Environmental Assessment Training:

- Implementing the Water Framework Directive in Environmental Assessment – London (**27 July**): ½ day briefing session.
- An Introduction to EIA – London (**4 September**).
- An Introduction to SEA – London (**4 September**).
- Guiding You Through the Screening and Scoping Process for EIA – Edinburgh (**6 October**).
- Carrying out Effective EIA Reviews – London (**14-15 October**).

- SEA Workshop for Practitioners – London (**21 October**).
- For all enquiries please contact training@iema.net; for further details see: <http://www.iema.net/events>

Climate Change Course in UK:

The University of East Anglia (Norwich) will again be holding a Climate Change and Development short course on **2-15 September 2009**. For more information and to access the registration form, visit <https://www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/schools/ssf/dev/odg/prodev/ccd>. Please direct any communication on this course to odg.train@uea.ac.uk.

Ecological Survey & Impact Assessment: IEEM Workshops:

- **22-23 September 2009**, Huntingdon & Peterborough: Otter Survey and Mitigation
 - **28 September**, Dunblane: Introduction to Bat Survey, Impacts and Mitigation
 - **November**, Kent: Surveying for Bats and Development
 - **November**, Derbyshire: The Role of Biodiversity Action Plans in Local Development Frameworks and Site-specific Development Proposals
- See: www.ieem.net for details

IEMA conference 2009, Lean and Green: How Environmental Practitioners Can Help Business Survive and Thrive:

22 September 2009, Central Hall, Westminster, London.

The conference will promote:

- The role and importance of the Environmental Professional in a Low Carbon and Resource Efficient Economy - how you can make money and save money for your company.
- Government's approach to a Low Carbon and Resource Efficient Economy including key policy initiatives, financial incentives and free support.
- The latest technologies, tools, skills and environmental thinking to equip you in making a real difference to your company's bottom line.

Further details are available from: <http://www.iema.net/conferences/leanandgreen>

'On the Move!' - International HIA Conference 2009, Rotterdam:

The 10th International Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Conference is to be held in Rotterdam, The Netherlands between **14 - 16 October 2009** with a theme of 'On the Move'. The annual conference on HIA will provide an international forum to debate and discuss a wide range of perspectives in HIA and explore the role of HIA in other sectors.

Health Impact Assessment is a multi-method and inter-disciplinary way of working on health promotion and disease prevention. It combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection. The HIA '09 conference will highlight exactly this variety of the method and has therefore divided the conference in three major topics, the so-called streams. These three streams are Health in all Policies, Tools and Methods and Special Topics.

Further details can be found at www.hia09.nl.

RTPI Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal Masterclass:

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



Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal:

19-20 November 2009, 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 in appraisal, cumulative impact assessment, and appropriate assessment.

See: www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/development/calendar.html

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

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