



IMPACT ASSESSMENT UPDATE

IRELAND-UK BRANCH OF IAIA:

JUNE 2008 NEWSLETTER

www.iaia.org

> 'Affiliates and Branches'

> 'Ireland-UK Branch'

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- IEMA Environmental Assessment Forum: 24 April 2008
 - IEMA Conference: 4-5 June 2008
 - SEA Training for Practitioners: IEMA Workshop: 25 June, 9 July
 - RTPI Conferences, July, October
 - IAP2 Certificate Programme in Public Participation: July
 - EIA: One-day courses: July, September
 - Transatlantic Studies Association Annual Conference: July
 - Public Participation and CSR: IAP2 Conference: August
 - IEMA Environmental Knowledge Exchange: September
 - HIA'08 International Health Impact Assessment Conference: October
 - SEA and Legal Challenge, Glasgow: October
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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Members,

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

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

- Request for examples linking EIA and EMS (by Lisa Palframan)
- Transatlantic Studies Association conference, Dundee, July 2008: call for papers (by Anthony Jackson)
- Looking for Researchers Employing Expressive Arts
- Climate Change in EIA: Stakeholders Views Requested
- Events update 8 May
- Branch update 23 April, event reminder, and call for contributions
- EU Evaluation Report on the EIA Directive
- Nuclear Power SEA Scoping consultation
- Next Branch event with IEMA Scotland West region: 'Towards World Leadership in Environmental Assessment?', 14, 21, 28 May 2008, Glasgow
- Water Conference, Cork, 17-18 April 2008
- 9th International HIA Conference, Liverpool, October 2008
- Draft Vision statement for the Branch
- EU-funded research on Sustainability Assessment
- Query for members on Equality Impact Assessment

For the next Branch newsletter (August 2008), 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 2008** Visit www.iaia.org for reports of the conference in **Perth**, Australia, on **4 - 9 May 2008**.

• **Assessing and Managing Cumulative Effects: IAIA Special Topic Meeting:** Calgary, Alberta, Canada, **6 – 9 November 2008**

• **IAIA 2009:** the IAIA international conference will be in Ghana in **May 2009**. See www.iaia.org for details.

IAIA Newsletter

The **April 2008** IAIA newsletter is now available for members to login and download at www.iaia.org > login > Publications > Newsletter Members.

Adam Boyden
Chair, IAIA Ire-UK Branch, on behalf of the Branch Committee

2. BRANCH NEWS

IAIA08: How was it for you?

All those members who did attend the IAIA08 conference in Perth are invited to contribute their feedback by email to ie_uk@iaia.org. John Fry and Ross Marshall provide some eloquent feedback below!

IAIA08: You're OK, how was it for me?

"For those who did not have to opportunity to go, IAIA08 - the 28th Annual IAIA conference - was held in Perth, Western Australia from 4-10 May 2008. I usually attend these conferences to learn and relax, but I found myself actually 'working' on each day - it was surprisingly rewarding!

The conference theme was *'The Art and Science of Impact Assessment'*, and the implied 'versus' occasioned almost heated debate in some corners of the venue - although nothing like the alcohol-fuelled tensions generated by the international bar football championship! (The Irish trainer hauled her defender out of a committee meeting, only to suffer ignominious defeat in the first round, at which point all interest was lost - even in England's performance.)

Bar footie was one of a number of innovations added to the tried and tested list of preliminary training courses, plenaries and concurrent sessions. Others included an introductory participative *'21st Century Dialogue'*, where tables of delegates head-banged to generate responses to satisfy the tyranny of computer-generated questions. Those responses were fed to an invisible panel of collators so that further questions could be generated - all while the clock was running. This session was a considerable technological achievement, and this useful discussion tool may become popular once members are more familiar with the procedure.

There were also extended exploratory theme forums, some of which also included interactive communication techniques - although there was an almost terrified rush for the door when the SEA session moved to round-table discussion mode! After that, I was one of several who submitted themselves to public analysis led by the great psychotherapist Dr. Morrison-Saunders, where we confessed to sins of Great Impact Assessment Disasters. Bill Page planted the idea with a question at the Seoul AGM, and the end result used humour to good effect in one of the best attended sessions of IAIA08. What started as a 'fun' idea with planted speakers generated some unexpected confessions from the floor and fully justified Bill's thoughtful prompt.

During the last southern hemisphere IAIA conference in 1998 Riki Thérivel made us think by saying that if we really believed in Kyoto we would never meet again. Some members may have taken that to heart, but my conscience was at least partially salved at IAIA08 by a sophisticated carbon-offset package put together by John Bailey at Murdoch University. This involved more than just tree-planting - although there was one morning session at the peri-urban Yanchep National Park just North of Perth (why do I always end up handling the prickly tree species)?

That afternoon (5th May) I represented the Branch at a meeting of the Global Network Forum, which is a replacement of the old *Affiliates Committee*. There was also representation from the Washington DC branch and from affiliates in Ghana, Italy, Mozambique, New Zealand, Portugal, South Africa and Spain. A round-table review of activities by these groups suggested that the Ireland-UK

Branch should be proud of its vision, level of organisation and achievements since inception. Most of the business of the meeting was procedural and taken up with discussing standardisation of the relationships between affiliates and IAIA central, and with the way that future GNF meetings would be structured.

The two technical visits that I went on had the right combination of technical issues and sightseeing, and both left me with the feeling of wanting to spend more time there. Ironically, the bauxite mine visit I sacrificed to attend the global network forum was rumoured to be even better - Murphy obviously went to Australia as well!

And the overall summation on the conference theme?: Impact Assessment is an Art form that involves as much verifiable science as possible..... or is that just me talking?"

*Dr. John Fry, Senior Lecturer, School of Biology & Environmental Science,
Agriculture & Food Science Centre, UCD Dublin*



Perth as seen the Botanical Gardens



Coastal heath



Reclaimed pond at Midland (former railway manufacturing centre and depot for the cross-Oz railway) where hyper-incendiary coal used for steam trains was stored under water: decontamination issues, as well as social impacts when half the town was on the 'wrong side of the tracks'!



Technical visit to an aboriginal demonstration site.

Photos courtesy of John Fry and Julietta Pinsanty-Levy

IAIA'08 post conference Technical Tour to the Pilbara region, Western Australia

"Three UK Branch members (Barry dalal-Clayton, Elizabeth Brookes and Ross Marshall (+ wife Jane) signed up for this year's post-conference tour into one of the most desolate and under-explored parts of Australia. The Pilbara region of outback Western Australia is vast, rugged, remote and often spectacular. At present it is experiencing unprecedented levels of mining, petroleum and other industrial development creating challenges for how development can co-exist with conservation of the unique biodiversity, landscapes and traditional aboriginal cultural heritage in the area. This unique tour took in visits to iron and gold mines, LNG production plants, aboriginal art, various spectacular national parks, coral reefs and stromatolites, bush walks and great debates on every subject under the sun. After 10 days, a lot of beer and just under 5,000 km travelled we were deposited back in Perth, the iron-ore rich red dust of the outback permeating every article of clothing."

*Ross Marshall, Manager
National Environmental Assessment Service, Environment Agency*

Branch event: Upgrading EIA for Greater Effectiveness, Oxford Brookes University, 4 December 2008

As indicated above, the Branch event at **Oxford Brookes University** is confirmed for **4th December 2008** as '**Upgrading EIA for greater effectiveness**'. Further details will be circulated when available to members and will be available on the [Branch webpage](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/planning/shortcourses/index.html) and at www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/planning/shortcourses/index.html

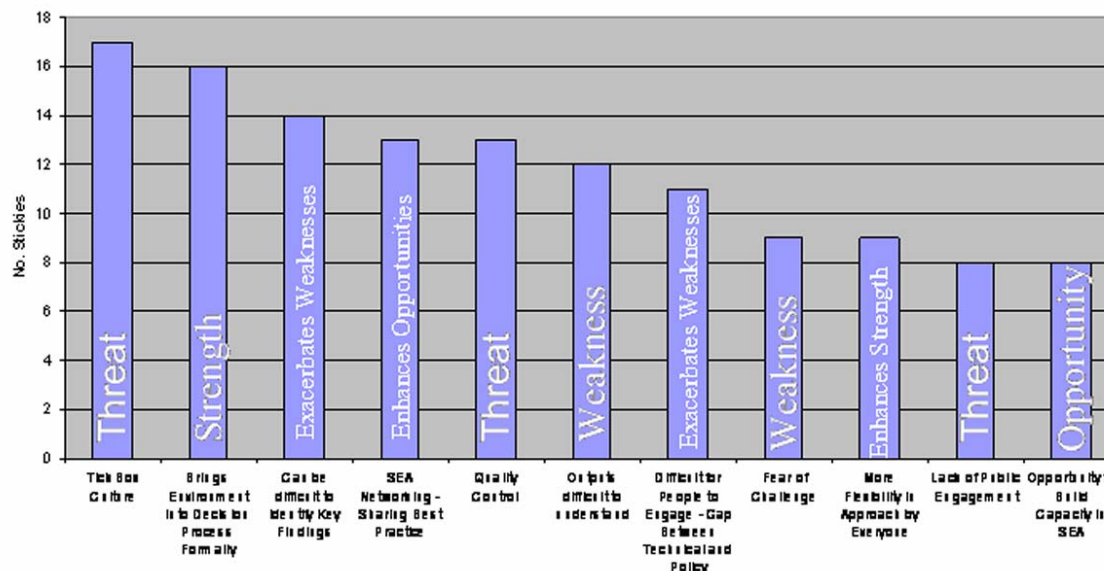
Branch Event: 'Towards World Leadership in Environmental Assessment'

The most recent Branch event was held as a 3-part free workshop on **14th, 21st, 28th May 2008** at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, jointly with IEMA's Scotland West Region. Each workshop was attended by 50 – 80 delegates, and generated useful debate and feedback as to the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for SEA in Scotland, and the scope for future improvements. An interim report from Iain Hossack is presented below. A full report of the event will be included in the next Branch newsletter.

"A series of three workshops - joint IEMA (Scotland West Region) - IAIA Ireland-UK Branch event, sponsored by Jacobs and hosted at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow – to facilitate an unofficial assessment of SEA in Scotland was held in May. The three sessions looked at, respectively, the current baseline of SEA, the aspirations of the delegates and potential ways forward for meeting these. The first session asked the participants to provide a baseline of SEA delivery in Scotland by describing SEA's strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) and what are the factors which enhance/exacerbate each. The participants were split into four groups to look at one of these themes individually e.g. "what is the threat to SEA in Scotland and what exacerbates this?". Each of the groups returned to the main auditorium and presented their results in bullet point items, which was followed by a group discussion. All delegates were then given eight (coloured) sticky labels. The colours meant nothing but the participants were asked to place their stickies on the items they felt most strongly about; for emphasis they could place as many of their stickies on the same item if they so wished. The results of the first session are presented below.

Towards World Leadership in Effective Environmental Assessment?

SEA Baseline ?



In the second session the delegates were given three excellent presentations representing views from academia, Scottish government planning and NGO perspectives, followed by further workshops at the end and into the third week.

My take home message, and its only a personal one, is that ultimately it's still the courts that will decide the "quality" of SEA. However approaches that can be robustly justified (peer reviewed methodologies?) that aim to (a) explain the environmental issues quickly and simply, without losing the complexity of the science and (b) engage the public (KPI = maximising consultation responses, good or bad) should be seen in the light of furthering the intentions of the SEA Directive and the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Further work is ongoing and a paper and summary document is being prepared."

Iain Hossack,
 Policy Officer (Environment), North Ayrshire Council
IHossack@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Future Branch Events

Discussions are ongoing with potential hosts regarding future Ireland-UK Branch events in 2008 in Leeds and Belfast. Full details will be available when dates and locations are confirmed. Branch events could include workshops which are planned to feed into the Update to the International Study of the Effectiveness of Environmental Assessment, following the IEMA Environmental Assessment Forum in April 2008.

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.

Permanent status for Ireland-UK Branch

The Ireland-UK Branch of IAIA has been in existence as a Pilot Branch of IAIA since 2005. The Branch has hosted 5 events, produces a newsletter for members, has issued a number of responses to consultations, and has an established [webpage](#). In April 2008, the Branch committee proposed that the IAIA Board approves 'permanent status' for the Ireland-UK Branch at IAIA08 in Perth, to recognise that the Branch is ready to 'shed its training wheels'. The letter to the Board, including the proposed programme of Branch activity 2008/09, is available to members on request.

IAIA HQ have now confirmed that the Board approved the permanent status of the Branch unanimously. The Branch can now proceed to work to its approved annual programme of activity for 2008-09, which includes:

- Continuing to engage with Government and other organisations to encourage the improvement in the status, quality and standards of impact assessment across the profession, working towards improving the reputation of impact assessment as a whole.
- Contributing to the IAIA Global Network Group of which it is a part (after inaugural meeting at IAIA08).
- Promoting IAIA membership to impact assessment professionals in Ireland and the UK wherever appropriate, to increase IAIA and Branch membership.
- Promoting alliances between IAIA and professional institutes and other organisations in Ireland and the UK who share common and overlapping interests, e.g. IEMA, where appropriate through written agreement.
- Finalising the Vision for the Branch.
- Electing a new Branch committee in 2008 (see below) to build on current activities and start new initiatives.
- Hold four Branch events in 2008, including at:
 - the University of Strathclyde (SEA, held on 14/21/28th May);
 - in Leeds (SEA as Integrated Appraisal; autumn 2008);
 - in Belfast (Health in SEA; autumn 2008);
 - Oxford Brookes University (EIA; **4th December** (see above); and
 - additional events as appropriate to support the IAIA Update to the International Study of the Effectiveness of Environmental Assessment, and in collaboration with other organisations.
- Undertake a members survey in 2008 to identify members' interests.
- Prepare a quarterly newsletter and other email bulletins, and encourage members to contribute to these and the main IAIA international newsletter.
- Work with IAIA's webmaster to update and further improve the IAIA Branch webpage content and presentation.
- Continue to promote, lead and contribute to responses to consultations which affect IAIA interests in Ireland and the UK, in response to member interest.

Please contact the Branch committee at ie_uk@iaia.org for further information on the above.

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. Three of the Branch committee members have recently been working overseas: Mat Cashmore (UEA, Norwich) is now completing a research fellowship at the Swedish EIA Centre at the University of Uppsala until June 2010; and Pilar Clemente-Fernandez and Shane Larkin have been recently working on various projects in Central America and the United Arab Emirates for Parsons Brinckerhoff.

In 2008, a new Branch committee needs to be formed of interested members. We will therefore shortly be calling for members to volunteer to join the committee in order to help progress and organise impact assessment-related activities across Ireland and the UK. It is hoped that there will be more than 10 volunteers, in which case an election will be held. We hope you agree this is an exciting time for impact assessment and the Branch, and will consider standing. Various policy and legal developments in Ireland and the UK and at IAIA are highlighting the need for the Branch to promote good practice and leadership in Impact Assessment more than ever. Please send an email to ie_uk@iaia.org for further information at this stage.

Planning Bill (England): Government Response to IAIA Branch and IEMA

The Planning Bill for England was introduced in the House of Commons on 27th November 2007, following the consultation on the Planning White Paper earlier in 2007 (see IAIA Branch newsletters of October 2007 and Feb 2008). The IAIA Branch and IEMA submitted joint responses to the Planning White Paper in August 2007, and to the Planning Bill in January 2008. Our response on the Planning Bill focused on the question of SEA of National Policy Statements, and can be found on the [Branch website](#).

In May 2008, a response was received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). The CLG response noted our concerns and stated that the appraisal of sustainability *'would need to include a Strategic Environmental Assessment where that is required by existing Regulation... The process of appraisal of sustainability will be individual to each national policy statement, although we envisage that certain common principles will apply... Until detailed proposals for them have been developed it is not possible to determine whether or not individual national policy statement will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.'* The letter from CLG is available on request from ie_uk@iaia.org.

Recent publications by Branch members:

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

- Burns, J. and A. Bond, 2008. The consideration of health in land use planning: Barriers and opportunities. [Environmental Impact Assessment Review](#), 28 (2-3), February – April, Pages 184-197.
- Sheate, W.R., Partidário, M.R., Byron, H., et al, 2008. Sustainability Assessment of Future Scenarios: Methodology and Application to Mountain Areas of Europe. *Environmental Management*. 41 (2): 282-299.

3. MEMBERS SECTION

Competence Frameworks for HIA

There is no national or international standard of competence yet for Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and there is a global shortage of competence to procure, carry out, or audit good quality HIAs. A national competence framework is on the agenda for discussion at the next International HIA conference in Liverpool in October (see 'Events' below).

Internationally, HIA is now required by International Finance Corporation Performance Standard 4 and the Equator Principles but, arguably, this is the least well understood part of the Standards. Further, these Standards do not apply to financing in OECD developed economies like the UK.

So, what are appropriate competence requirements? In the oil and gas sector, some competence requirements have emerged that could be more widely adopted.

A lead HIA practitioner who is able to carry out an HIAs should have a background in a health related subject, have attended a recognised HIA training course, and should have participated in at least three HIAs. This is level 3.

The same background and experience is required to audit, appraise, or evaluate an HIA report produced by others.

To participate in an HIA, attendance at a recognised HIA training course lasting 3-5 days is a suggested starting point. This is level 2.

The skills needed to procure HIA services are simpler. In order to procure, you do not have to be able to carry out the service yourself. You need to be able to judge whether the practitioner has the skills and experience listed above, understand the budgetary requirements, and you need to be able to write a suitable Terms of Reference or Invitation to Tender. These skills can be acquired by attending a 1/2-1 day course. This is level 1.

For recent publication around this theme see Birley M H (2007) "A fault analysis for health impact assessment" and Birley M H (2005) "Health impact assessment in multinationals".

Both can be downloaded from www.birleyhia.co.uk/publications.htm

Martin Birley, Birley HIA

International Survey on IT-aided Public Participation

The results of an international survey on public participation practice, and IT-aided participatory methods, undertaken by Ainhoa González will be soon published by Computers, Environment and Urban Systems (CEUS). The questionnaire was initially distributed at the first global SEA conference (held in Prague, 2005) and subsequently e-mailed to one hundred members of the IAIA. The survey tackled three key aspects: (1) the implementation and effectiveness of current public participation procedures, (2) the use and application of IT during participative processes, and (3) the potential of GIS as a tool for information sharing and collation.

The paper is currently available on-line in scientific journal search engines, such as ScienceDirect, and cited as follows:

González, A, Gilmer, A, Foley, R, Sweeney, J and Fry, J (In Press) Technology-aided participative methods in environmental assessment: An international perspective. doi:10.1016/j.compenvurbsys.2008.02.001.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm thanks to all those IAIA members that contributed to my survey and helped me provide an overview of international public participation experiences.

Ainhoa González, Researcher, Dublin Institute of Technology

EIA / EMS Case Studies Sought

Lisa Palframan at the University of Hertfordshire is carrying out research as part of the UK's contribution to the International Association for Impact Assessment's 10 year update study of the effectiveness of environmental assessment. Specifically, Lisa is seeking examples of where EIA and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) have been effectively linked, perhaps resulting in better decision-making or environmental protection. For example, the mitigation measures proposed during the EIA for a new development might have been integrated into the EMS once the site was operational, through the register of aspects and impacts or monitoring programme. "Even where people feel that an opportunity to link an EIA and EMS has been overlooked or posed difficulties, I'd be interested in hearing their experiences."

If you can help, please contact Lisa directly on 01707 286364 or l.palframan@herts.ac.uk.

Climate Change in EIA

Remi Olaogun is currently undertaking research investigating stakeholders' views of the treatment of climate change issues in Environmental Impact Assessment, for an MSc in Environmental Management for Business from the University of Hertfordshire. The research aims to assess whether EIA is being used effectively to assess and evaluate carbon dioxide emissions and address climate change issues in new developments, and to identify potential improvements to current EIA practice.

Remi would be grateful for any impact assessment practitioners and environmental planning professionals to express their views on ways of improving how climate change issues are addressed in EIA, whether EIA is a suitable tool for addressing climate change issues.

An email was sent to members requesting assistance on 20 May 2008. If you can assist Remi by completing a questionnaire on the subject, please contact O.Olaogun@herts.ac.uk.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT NEWS

1. EU evaluation report on the EIA Directive

Earlier in 2008, the European Union's Directorate-General for Enterprise & Industry published a report of the evaluation of the EIA Directive 85/337 (as amended) across six member states:

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/dgs/eval.htm>

It reports that stakeholders generally recognise EIA to be a valuable tool in preventing harmful environmental impacts, understanding the significance of potential impacts, and improving the awareness of the need for sustainable development.

As a share of project costs, EIAs tend to range from an upper range of 1% for smaller projects down to 0.1% for larger projects. EIA procedures can add up to approximately 20% - 25% to the time otherwise taken during project planning, but many requirements to provide information are the same irrespective of EIA.

Principal problems with the EIA regime were identified by industry stakeholders:

1. Lack of firm timetables with various EIA stages, leading to delays.
2. Project screening thresholds being set too low, leading to 'unnecessary' EIAs.
3. Too onerous a level of consultation being required, especially for smaller projects
4. Lack of skills / resources in the Competent Authority, leading to delays and overly-defensive screening.
5. Overlaps in assessment requirements between the EIA and other environmental directives (e.g. IPPC, Habitats) leading to 'double assessments'.
6. A lack of adequate screening of projects on case-by-case basis, especially for smaller projects, in relation to the risk of significant impacts
7. A lack of project/site alternatives being available for smaller projects that reduces the added value provided by EIA.

The report makes several recommendations to the EU on ways of improving the EIA system across the EU, ranging from a 'hard' EU regulatory response such as a new Regulation, amended EIA Directive and guidance, to 'softer' advice to member states. Some of these may be taken up nationally by member states.

The report emphasises the general importance of improved training and competence for competent authorities, consultees and consultants, and the need for improvements in screening and scoping procedures with firm timetables. Other recommendations to simplify EIA and improve cost-effectiveness include:

- 'scoping in' EIA any 'appropriate assessments' required by the Habitats Directive;
- increasing pre-application discussions to establish the broad parameters of an acceptable project;
- mandatory scoping, and 'binding' scoping opinions, to focus on the key issues and reduce risks of continual extensions to scope;
- independent quality control over EIA procedures and ESs, e.g. as in the Netherlands;
- reducing the number of smaller projects that require an EIA, by raising the size thresholds above which an EIA is required or where screening for EIA is required, so long as development consent procedures are considered sufficiently robust to ensure adequate review of the environmental impacts without recourse to formal EIA;
- introducing less onerous, simplified, EIA procedures for smaller projects with less significant impacts;
- further review of the scope to reduce double assessments with other Directives;
- more robust screening procedures that ensure sufficient evidence is provided on which to justify a requirement for EIA, e.g. through a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) test.

The consultees for the study (listed in the report) included a number of IAIA members who assisted GHK Consulting with their research.

2. Draft practical guidance on air, water and soil in Strategic Environmental Assessments

The Scotland & Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) has commissioned research aimed at providing guidance on how to take account of **air, water and soil** as part of Strategic Environmental Assessments. SNIFFER are now inviting comments on the draft guidance from stakeholders with a keen interest in SEA. Consultation on the draft guidance is now underway until **11 August 2008**, after launch events in Edinburgh and Belfast were held in June. For more information and to respond to the consultation please visit http://www.sniffer.org.uk/whats_new.asp

3. Draft guidance on health in Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Draft Guidance on Health in Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), published for consultation in March 2007 by the Department of Health (in close cooperation with the Health Protection Agency and in consultation with the DCLG and Environment Agency), was the first SEA guidance to focus solely on the related SEA topics of population and human health. The guidance is intended as good practice to be used by all those involved in plan-making and SEAs.

This report summarises the responses made to the consultation (from individual written responses, consultation workshops, conferences and regional meetings) and provides the Department's response to these:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Responsestoconsultations/DH_083716

4. Consultation on Draft Marine Bill

The UK's draft Marine Bill was published for consultation in April 2008. See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/marine/legislation/index.htm>

Key issues covered include:

- the creation of a new Marine Management Organisation (MMO);
- planning and licensing activities in marine waters;
- marine nature conservation;
- managing marine fisheries;
- inland and migratory fisheries;
- modernisation and streamlining of enforcement powers;
- access to coastal land.

The deadline for comments is **26 June 2008**. To help the Branch prepare a response to the consultation, please contact ie_uk@iaia.org

5. Round 3 leasing programme for new offshore windfarm sites

The Crown Estate has launched the round 3 leasing programme for 25GW of new offshore windfarm sites by 2020, which effectively accelerates the delivery of offshore windfarm projects in the UK. Round 3 builds on the 8GW of offshore wind projects currently under development as a result of the round 1 and 2 leasing programmes. If successful, rounds 1, 2 and 3 combined would lead to a potential total of 33 GW of offshore wind energy.

Potential developers will be invited to register interest in development zones, which have been identified through spatial planning by the Crown Estate and through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) being undertaken by BERR. The development zones identified will be evaluated within the UK Offshore

Energy Plan SEA assessment framework. Successful bidders will have exclusive rights to develop windfarms in specified zones. The Crown Estate will invest in the development process, including co-investing 50% of planning consents costs and funding enabling works to speed up windfarm delivery. However, the Crown Estate is not intending to take any role in the eventual ownership or operation of offshore windfarms resulting from this programme other than to provide leases of the seabed to operators. See: <http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/newscontent/92-round3.htm>

6. Severn Estuary Tidal Power Feasibility Study SEA - Call for Evidence Issued

The consortium managing the Severn Tidal Power Feasibility Study SEA process (led by Parsons Brinckerhoff) issued a call for evidence in May 2008 for: 1) proposals for development which will generate electricity from the tidal range of the Severn Estuary (closing on 13 June), and 2) information which could potentially contribute to the evidence base for the initial appraisal of schemes and the SEA (closing on 11 July).

The Severn tidal power two-year feasibility study aims to recommend a preferred tidal range technology option or combination of options (tidal stream technologies are not being considered). The first phase (ending in October/November 2008) will identify major environmental and engineering risks, examine the feasibility of habitat compensation and determine whether there are any potential showstoppers. If no showstoppers are identified, and delivery of compensatory habitats is feasible, the project will go forward to Phase 2 (November 2008 to April 2010) and tidal power options will be assessed, short-listed and a preferred option chosen. Additional research will also be commissioned during this second phase. It is highly likely that any search for compensatory habitat will need to be UK and EU wide. See:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/energy/sources/renewables/explained/severntidalpower/page41473.html>

7. Consultation on EIA regulations for Review of Old Mineral Permissions in Northern Ireland

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland and the Planning Service have issued a consultation paper on proposals to apply the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) to applications for the review of old mineral planning permissions.

The Planning Reform (NI) Order 2006 inserted provisions into the Planning (NI) Order 1991 which, when commenced, will require a review of old mineral planning permissions to ensure that they comply with modern environmental standards. The provisions will also prevent dormant quarries returning to active status, by virtue of their old permissions, without any review of their operating conditions. These provisions would be commenced at the same time as the proposed amendments to the EIA regulations are brought into operation. Consultation ends **4 July 2008**. These would mirror amendments to EIA regulations elsewhere in the UK. See:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/foi_details.htm?docid=4820

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/Corporate_Services/Consultation_Documents/consultation_romps.htm

8. Eco-Towns

A short-list of 15 'Eco-Towns' were proposed by the UK Government in April. Eco-towns would be the first new towns since the 1960s and are intended by the Government to 'tackle the combined challenges of climate change, the need for more sustainable living and a real shortage of housing for families and first-time buyers'. The Government intends to build five Eco-towns by 2016 and up to ten by 2020 as part of ambitious plans to build 3 million homes by 2020.

The proposed Eco-Towns on the short-list will be assessed as part of a Sustainability Appraisal (compliant with the SEA Directive) to be undertaken during the development of a Planning Policy Statement on Eco-Towns. Public consultation on the draft Policy Statement and its Sustainability Appraisal Report are due to be undertaken this summer. All adopted Eco-Town proposals will still be required to gain planning permission and are highly likely to require Environmental Impact Assessment as part of this process. See <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/737721>.

The Department for Communities and Local Government's recently published a report of its initial scrutiny of the current Eco-Town proposals in relation to the Eco-Towns criteria. Where proposals met these, it examined transport and environment issues and opportunities arising. See: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/Eco-townsassessmentsummaries>

9. The State of England's Natural Environment

On 19 May, Natural England, the UK Government's statutory advisor on wildlife and landscape protection, launched their State of the Environment Report 2008, and called for a new approach to managing our natural environment if it is to stand any chance of adapting to the next 50 years of unavoidable climate change and the modern pressures of development. The findings from the report have led Natural England to publish a Manifesto for the Natural Environment, which outlines what needs to be done to set the nation on a greener path by tackling difficult questions to help protect our future natural assets.

Included in the Manifesto are commitments to:

- use Natural England's statutory position to ensure that planning and transport proposals (including road building, local development frameworks, port proposals, and airport expansion), and water extraction licensing contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment;
- help find the space for renewable energy in England by publishing a map of suitable locations for onshore wind energy developments, as 'We urgently need a strategic assessment of the options for renewable energy rather than a piecemeal approach'.

Natural England's Press Release and Manifesto are found here <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/press/news2008/190508.htm>

10. Launch of the revised PPS12 - Local Spatial Planning

The Department for Communities and Local Government Department (CLG) has launched the revised version of Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Spatial Planning. This document relates to the production of Local Development Frameworks by Local Authorities in England and alongside the Planning Manual (also issued) replaces the old PPS12 - Local Development Frameworks.

The revised version contains the same requirements for Sustainability Appraisal (compliant with the SEA Directive) as the previous version. However, it clearly indicates a desire to see a proportionate approach to sustainability appraisal and the reporting of their findings. It also clarifies the need to include the findings of other assessments within the evidence base and the fact that the findings of other assessments should be summarised within the sustainability appraisal. Finally the revised PPS indicates that:

'Sustainability Assessment should provide a powerful means of proving to decision makers, and the public, that the plan is the most appropriate given reasonable alternatives'. Indicating the Government's desire to ensure sustainability appraisal is a key part of the Local Authority plan-making process.

The new PPS12 and Planning Manual can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/pps12isp.pdf; and www.pas.gov.uk/planmakingmanual

Josh Fothergill, Environment Agency

11. Commission calls for review of air travel evidence base

The Sustainable Development Commission's latest report 'Breaking the holding pattern: a new approach to aviation policymaking in the UK', finds that there is widespread controversy over the basic economic, environmental and technological data on air travel in the UK, and concludes that a new evidence base establishing the true benefits and impacts of aviation must be created before any decisions on major airport expansion can take place. The report recommends that government should address this issue through convening an independent Special Commission to compile an updated evidence base, stimulate a national debate with the public and key stakeholders, and should revise their existing policy on air transport, in the light of the findings.

See <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/aviation.html>

12. Planning for positive health impacts

Good town planning has a critical impact on the health of communities, according to research published in April 2008 by the Sustainable Development Commission. The 'Health, place and nature' report that found planning is a key factor when it comes to tackling health problems such as obesity, mental ill health and diabetes. The research found:

- Access to good quality green space had a positive effect on the physical health and mental well-being of adults and children, and could lead to shorter recovery times from illness.
- Environments that encourage walking and cycling could increase levels of physical activity and reduce the risk of obesity.
- Despite recent improvements, air pollution was estimated to reduce life expectancy by seven to eight months, and cost £20 billion every year.
- Lack of accessible services, amenities and public transport links within communities could reinforce the negative health impacts of social exclusion.

See http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/Outdoor_environments_and_health.pdf

13. Stronger protection for World Heritage Sites in England

The UK Government is consulting on proposals to give additional protection to all 17 World Heritage Sites in England through changes the planning system. The proposed changes would put all English World Heritage Sites on the same footing as its Conservation Areas, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty by preventing minor development (such as roof alterations, new buildings nearby or artificial stoning) occurring without specific planning permission. In addition, English Heritage is publishing guidance that gives detailed advice on how to give proper consideration and protection to World Heritage Sites. The new proposals follow commitments made in the 2007 White Paper Heritage Protection for the 21st Century, published by the Department for Culture Media and Sport.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/worldheritagesitesconsultation>

14. Northern Ireland EIA Regulations for offshore developments

The Offshore Electricity Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 apply the requirements of the EIA Directive to the consideration of applications for consent for offshore developments under Article 39 or 40 of the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. See

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/sr/sr2008/nisr_20080055_en_1

15. Development and Flood Risk - Practice Guide (England)

This practice guide, published by DCLG in June 2008, complements *Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk* (PPS25) and provides guidelines on how to implement development and flood risk policies by the land use planning system. The guide also includes working examples through case studies. This replaces the *Development and Flood Risk: A Practice Guide Companion to PPS25 'Living Draft' - A Consultation Paper* published on 19 February 2007 (see March 2007 Branch newsletter). See

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps25practiceguide>

16. Planning and Climate Change: Developing Practice Guidance (England)

The new [Planning Policy Statement \(PPS\): Planning and Climate Change](#) for England was published in December 2007 (see February 2008 Branch newsletter, 3.10). To assist practitioners in the challenges of implementing the PPS's policies, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has asked Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and Faber Maunsell to develop practice guidance. A working draft of this is now available at <http://www.erm.com/practiceguidance>.

The guidance includes reference to the need for climate change considerations to be integrated into Sustainability Appraisals and Strategic Environmental Assessment. It also states that for development proposals subject to EIA, Environmental Statements should already be including assessments of building and transport emissions, impacts on micro-climate and water use, and that the assessments should, across all topics, be taking appropriate account of vulnerability and measures to adapt to climate change.

17. Revised Offshore EIA Guidance Notes

The UK's Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform published guidance notes on the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipelines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999 (as amended in 2007). The guidance is intended to provide general information and advice to operators, the environmental authorities and the public in relation to the processes and procedures which arise under the regulations. Consultation on the guidance notes ended 7 May 2008. See:

<http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/consultations/EIAGuidanceNote.htm>

18. Guidance on Appropriate Assessment for Highway Plans and Projects

In April 2008, England's Highways Agency issued 'Interim Advice Note 110/08: Assessment of Implications (Of Highways Plans And Projects) On European Sites (Including Appropriate Assessment)' in order to:

- provide guidance on appropriate assessment of highways plans and projects;
- provide guidance on Regulation 69 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994; and
- consolidate current best practice advice in this area.

'Appropriate Assessment' (or Habitats Regulations Assessment) is part of the process for assessing the implications of plans and projects on sites of designated European importance for nature conservation, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites. This advice applies to highway plans and projects where there is any possibility of a significant effect on a European Site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and the plan or project is not directly connected with the management of the site(s). The guidance introduces forthcoming amendments to Section 4 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11 and provides supplementary information to that contained within Interim Advice Note 78/06 Volume 11, Section 2, Part 2 Environmental Assessments.

See <http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/ians/index.htm>

19. Additional protection for Water Voles and other wildlife

As of 6 April 2008, extra protection for the Water Vole will be put in place under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Variation of Schedule 5) (England) Order 2008. Together with the Angel Shark, Roman Snail, Spiny Seahorse and Short-snouted Seahorse, they will have protection against being killed, injured, or taken from the wild. This is in addition to the current offence of damage or obstruction to their place of shelter/protection. Water vole populations and their habitats should now no longer be compromised by development or other activities. Similar measures are likely to follow in other parts of the UK. See

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2008/080226a.htm>

and <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si200804>

20. Sustainability Assessment: A step beyond environmental impact assessment

Sustainability assessment (SA) aims to improve decision making in rural areas, by going beyond the requirements of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to consider social and economic, as well as environmental, factors.

Research by the BioScene project has shown that SA can be used to create 'win-win' situations when planning rural development where rural incomes are secured and biodiversity is protected. The EU-funded BioScene study used SA to investigate restructuring agriculture in mountainous regions in Europe with a view to facilitating the implementation of the Natura 2000 strategy, a Europe-wide initiative to protect valuable habitats. The study focused on using SA to predict the outcomes of different approaches to integrating agri-environmental, conservation and rural development policies.

See <http://www.fona.de/de/6055>. Source: Sheate, W.R., Partidário, M.R., Byron, H., *et al* (2008). Sustainability Assessment of Future Scenarios: Methodology and Application to Mountain Areas of Europe. *Environmental Management*. 41 (2): 282-299. Contact: w.sheate@cep.co.uk

21. Scottish Ministers refuse Lewis windfarm due to environmental impacts

Plans by Lewis Windpower for a wind farm at Barvas Moor in Lewis have been refused consent by the Scottish Government on the grounds of incompatibility with the European Habitats and Birds Directives. The Scottish Ministers concluded that the proposed 181 turbine Lewis Wind Farm would have significant adverse impacts on the Lewis Peatlands Special Protection Area, designated due to its high value for rare and endangered birds. See the Scottish Government's news release: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/04/21102611>

See also the Lewis Wind Farm Environmental Statement (2004, with addenda in 2005 and 2006) at: <http://www.lewiswind.com/application/environment/>

22. Consultation on the Draft Soil Strategy for England

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is consulting on a draft Soil Strategy for England, with the purpose of providing a sound framework for policy making and delivery with the aim of ensuring the sustainable management of England's soils. The deadline for responses is **23 June 2008**.

See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/soilstrategy/index.htm>

5. OTHER EVENTS:

IEMA Environmental Assessment Forum, 24 April 2008

The inaugural IEMA Environmental Assessment (EA) Forum in Birmingham was considered a great success by the vast majority of the 150 delegates. It was chaired by IAIA member Ross Marshall, who also gave insight into the health of the EA 'patient' and encouraged participants to get involved in IAIA's Effectiveness study. The day included a wide range of useful and fascinating presentations and workshops on EIA, SEA, and the relationship with health and public participation. Carys Jones, another IAIA member, provided an international perspective on the effectiveness of environmental assessment, with reference to the IAIA's update study. Questions from the floor raised issues relating to the Planning Bill (for England) and the treatment of climate change in EIA. All the presentations from the day's plenary sessions and workshops can be found at www.iema.net/conferences/eaforum

HEMA Conference: 4-5 June 2008

HEMA's Annual Conference, held in Bournemouth, also provided plenary sessions and workshops relating to impact assessment, including on SEA guidance, appropriate assessments under the Habitats Regulations, and climate change impacts. All the presentations from the day can be found at <http://www.iema.net/conferences/iemaconference>

HEMA Workshop: SEA Training for Practitioners:

- **25 June 2008**, London
- **9 July 2008**, Manchester

Training for practitioners with experience of SEA and who are seeking to progress better practice in SEA (and Integrated Assessment) through seminars, presentations and interactive workshops; prepared and organised by Enfusion with a team of experienced SEA & SA practitioners/researchers led by IAIA member Professor Barbara Carroll CEnv MIEMA.

<http://www.iema.net/events>

RTPI Conferences www.rtpiconferences.co.uk

- Planning Convention
9-11 July 2008, London
- Strategic Environmental Assessments and Sustainability Appraisal Masterclass
22 October 2008, London

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2):

Certificate Programme in Public Participation:

14 - 18 July, London

"The Certificate Course offers a clear and thoroughly tested approach to building personal and organisational skills in engaging people in a meaningful way. The course is delivered in three discrete modules over five days. It provides a clearly articulated and unique approach to involving the public in decisions that affect them and using public input to make better decisions. The three modules are:

- Planning for Effective Public Participation (two days)
- Effective Communication for Public Participation (one day)
- Techniques for Effective Public Participation (two days)

At the end of the three modules, participants will receive a Certificate from IAP2 that is increasingly recognised in countries as diverse as the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay, and the UK.

See <http://www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/IAP2trainingjunjul08.pdf>"

Dr Robert Nurick, Director, Development Focus Trust Ltd

EIA: One-day courses:

- EIA: Principles and Practice
7 July, 3 October 2008
- Environmental Statement Preparation and Review
14 July, 14 November 2008
- EIA Project Management
5 September, 1 December 2008

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

Transatlantic Studies Association Annual Conference

7-10 July 2008, Dundee

Current themes of the 'Planning Regeneration and the Environment Track' include strategic environmental assessment (SEA) on both sides of the Atlantic.

Panel co-ordinator: Tony Jackson, Town and Regional Planning, University of Dundee, e-mail: a.a.jackson@dundee.ac.uk, see

<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/iteas/conference/>

Public Participation and Corporate Social Responsibility: from why to how

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) (UK & Ireland) International Conference:

27-29 August 2008, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/conferences/>

IEMA Environmental Knowledge Exchange

3 September 2008, Oxford

Building on the success of the first Environmental Knowledge Exchange held in November 2007, the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), in association with the Environmental Knowledge Transfer Network, will again bring together academics and practitioners from the environmental field.

Structured as a multi-disciplinary dialogue, the Knowledge Exchange provides a platform to discuss cutting edge research that deals with specific issues in the management of environmental problems as well as policy considerations regarding the natural environment. For researchers this entails disseminating their research, exploring how practitioners could put these ideas in practice, and discussing practitioner insights to further the research agenda.

<http://www.iema.net/events>

HIA'08 – Health Impact Assessment and Sustainable Well-being

9th International Health Impact Assessment Conference:

9-10 October 2008, Liverpool; Training Day 8th October

<http://www.profbriefings.co.uk/hia08/>

SEA and legal challenge: Threats, opportunities and barriers

October 2008 (tbc), organised by the David Livingstone Centre for Sustainability, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow:

This one-day conference focuses on the Northern Irish legal challenge on the SEA's of two development plans, which raised questions about the coherence of the SEA process and reporting, but also how the European SEA Directive was integrated into UK law. Details and registration will be found here when finalised:

www.ce.strath.ac.uk/events

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. See www.iaia.org/modx/index.php?id=354 (www.iaia.org > 'Affiliates and Branches' > 'Ireland-UK Branch')

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 for members at IAIA Branch events with reduced rates for members
- Branch Newsletter with domestic impact assessment news, events listing 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).

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.

A primary purpose of IAIA is developing international and local capacity to make wise decisions regarding the anticipation, management and planning of environmental change. Considering ecological and human consequences is essential to enhance the quality of life for all.

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, including:

- Subscription to *Impact Assessment & Project Appraisal*, one of the best professional journals in the world
- Newsletter with international news about the profession

- Direct access to web site, resource networks, searchable database
- Direct access to training courses and customised training
- Reduced rate for attendance at IAIA's annual conference
- Opportunities to attend and participate in international and regional conferences
- Networking in special interest area Sections
- Direct access to e-news network and listservs
- Opportunities to assist in global and regional capacity building

Adam Boyden

Chair, IAIA Ire-UK Branch, On Behalf of the IAIA Ire-UK Branch Committee

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