

Assessing regional sustainable development, by Buruzs Adrienn

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ABSTRACT

Assessing regional sustainable development

Key topic - Researchers as stakeholders: Developments in evaluation methodologies

To help regional managers make decisions to progress sustainability they need tools that provide information about sustainability across the region. These tools need to integrate economic, social and environmental information based on sound principles in such a way that it is user-friendly, clear and robust so that decisions made are transparent and accountable.

Impact assessment is not about publishing success stories, nor auditing expenditure on activities. It examines more than activities and inputs, a process described as monitoring. Monitoring and auditing can be used as inputs to impact assessment. Impact assessment is concerned with measuring process, outcomes and outputs in a variety of ways. Monitoring of policy (sustainable developments) can be described according to the time-frame in which it is conducted. Ex-ante (before) and post-ante (after) evaluation are commonly applied in the planning (ex-ante) and monitoring (ex post evaluation) stages. The experience is that the combination of the two perspectives gives best results, the ex ante assessment helps to identify which phenomena are expected and so which should be monitored in order to capture the most important impacts.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a systematic overview of the 'modern' mathematical and methodological instruments like Environmental State Evaluation (ESE), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA), the GIS techniques and Fuzzy evaluation methods. We would like to provide the main issues and problems related to evaluation in general of these techniques. The first section discusses definitions, the scope of evaluation, and the tools for evaluation. The second section reviews the existing generic analytical frameworks for evaluation; the third section the state-of-the-art in this field in regional development programmes. Finally in the concluding part we reflect on the open questions that need to be addressed when developing an analytical framework for evaluation suitable for regional development programmes.