

**André Martinuzzi & Reinhard Steurer**

Research Institute for Managing Sustainability

Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration

andre.martinuzzi@wu-wien.ac.at, reinhard.steurer@wu-wien.ac.at

## **Knowledge-based Governance for SD: A Typology of Appraisals around the Policy Cycle**

As the European Commission often puts it, we live in an age of a knowledge-based economy and society. In the Lisbon Strategy, for example, the EU “set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become *the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*”.<sup>1</sup> If we extend this often-used phrase, we can say that a knowledge-based economy and society also implies knowledge-based governance for sustainable development (SD), i.e. public decision-making processes that build on evidence produced by different types of appraisals, rather than on ideological standpoints. This presentation gives an exploratory overview of the interplay between the steps of public governance and appraisal exercises. It aims to sketch the “forest of appraisals”, which may easily get out of sight because it consists of many different trees.

After highlighting key political roles appraisals can play (legitimise policies, moderate conflicts and facilitate learning), the presentation shows that the governance of SD can be framed as a cyclical process that follows several steps (more or less resembling the classical policy cycle). The steps of the “governance cycle” identified in the presentation are (i) political commitment and guidance, (ii) specify policy goals, (iii) design policies, (iv) implement policies and (v) renew political commitment and guidance.

In a next step, the presentation explores in a selective way that most types of appraisal are tailored in a way they do not address the entire governance cycle equally; they rather target some of its steps. Two conclusions are derived from this observation: First, different forms of appraisals have different sorts of impact along the cycle of public governance. While studies may have a strong influence on political agenda setting, monitoring with SD Indicators may be most relevant for specifying policy goals, and impact assessments may target in particular the design of policies, etc. Second, the presentation also highlights that the nature of different appraisals is also shaped by their place in the governance cycle. In other words, knowledge-based governance is not a one-way-street of influence from appraisal to governance, but also about how governance shapes appraisals.

Finally, the presentation explores how strong the reciprocity between policy-makers and public administrators on the one hand and the appraisal community on the other hand is, and it concludes that overall the degree of self-reference should not be underestimated.

---

<sup>1</sup> European Council (2000): Presidency Conclusions - Lisbon European Council, 23 and 24 March 2000, DOC/00/8.