



Sixth Framework Programme

Specific Targeted Research or Innovation Project

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(IMP)3

Project - Description

IMProving the **IMP**lementation of Environmental **IMP**act Assessment

funded by the Community's
Sixth Framework Programme



(IMP)3

IMProving the IMPlmentation of Environmental IMPact Assessment

Priority 8.1 *"Integrating and strengthening the European Research Area"* of the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities

(IMP)3 consortium

OIR, Österreichisches Institut für Raumplanung (Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning);	Austria
UBA, Umweltbundesamt (Federal Environment Agency);	Austria
WCH, Centre for Health Business Unit Velindre NHS Trust Wales	United Kingdom
Nordregio	Sweden
CITTA, Research Centre for Territory, Transports and Environment Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto,	Portugal
SZAP, Slovenskej Agentury Zivotnehó Prostredia (Slovak Environmental Agency)	Slovakia

Project main goal(s)

The development of projects as e.g. the construction of main roads and railway-lines, the development of industrial plants, shopping centres and theme parks, etc. can cause serious effects on the environment. Such effects could be e.g. air and water pollution, land consumption, climatic effects, disturbance of protected animals, noise exposure, damage of cultural heritage etc.

The EIA Directive has been in place for almost 20 years. Difficulties and shortcomings in the application of the initial Directive led to an amendment in 1997 (97/11/EC). Its application and effectiveness was evaluated by a report of the Commission¹ that revealed that there are still weaknesses as well as considerable variability in the Member States' implementation.

As a result of the five-year-report, the Commission aimed for a deeper evaluation of problematic aspects of the EIA Directive and launched a project within the 6th framework programme. The project IMProving the IMPlmentation of Environmental IMPact Assessment – (IMP)3 is based on the results of the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application and effectiveness of the EIA Directive.

¹ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application and effectiveness of the EIA Directive (Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by Directive 97/11/EC). How successful are the Member States in implementing the EIA Directive.

Concentrating on some of the weak points the report outlined, (IMP)3 focuses on three main objectives:

- Objective A: a better incorporation of human health aspects into EIA;
- Objective B: a better integration and more consistency of risk assessments, regarding various sources of risks (natural hazards, accidents, sabotage); and
- Objective C: a survey of project types subject to EIA.

(IMP)3 shall provide important input in the process of improving the application of EIA regarding health aspects, risk assessment and the Directives Annexes.

Technical approach

Research on the improvement of the application of the environmental impact assessment needs a sound literature review, including especially existing evaluation reports and different types of national legislation as well as a sufficient communication with EIA-stakeholders (as national governmental organisations, regional bodies with competence in EIA-issues, NGO's, consultants, other EIA proponents). The main work of (IMP)3 is organised along the following work-packages (WPs):

- WP **"Human health"** focuses on Objective A: a better incorporation of human health aspects into EIA;
- WP **"Risk assessment"** concentrates on Objective B: a better integration and more consistency of risk assessments, regarding various sources of risks (natural hazards, accidents, sabotage);
- WP **"Projects subject to EIA"** focuses on Objective C: a survey of project types subject to EIA.

For gathering the data required from various sources with very different standards, a kind of "triangle-approach" was developed (see Fig. 1). Thereby, the literature review forms the basis of the "research triangle", whereas both sides cover the communication-tools with the EIA-applicants in Europe: on one side a questionnaire that was distributed to about 970 EIA-stakeholders and on the other side interviews that have been conducted with 53 selected EIA-experts.



Fig. 1: (IMP)3 "triangle-approach" for gathering and analysing data

Fig. 3: (IMP).3



Outcome: Policy options and SWOT-analysis

Within each of the main themes (human health, risk assessment and Projects subject to EIA), several policy options are elaborated. The main purposes of the policy options are to provide decision support to the policy making process at Community level, to assist informed decision-making regarding possible future amendments of the EIA directive, and to contribute to the improvement of guidance such as supportive measures on EIA application, but also to stimulate discussions within the European EIA community.

The variety of the options comprises the whole range of potential measures that could be taken into account at the European level. This includes both “soft” and legislative courses of action. They are designed to operate mainly along three major axes:

- guidance;
- supportive measures;
- regulatory or legislative measures.

The effects of the policy options drawn up are analysed by a SWOT-analysis providing a formal way of identifying strengths and weaknesses of each option, and of examining the opportunities and threats that arise from them. The SWOT-analysis is a basic, straightforward model that supports decision making processes by a structured discussion potential pros and cons of a decision. The results of (IMP)3 will be laid down within four reports: Report Human Health, Report Risk Assessment, Report Projects Subject to EIA and Final Report (see Fig. 4).

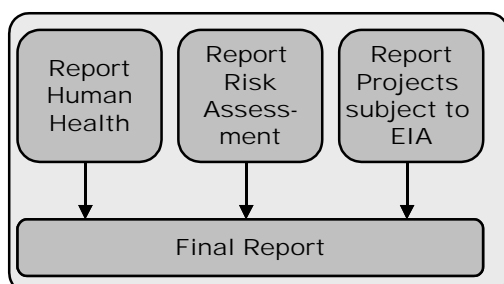


Fig. 4: Structure of the reports of (IMP)3

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