

Newsletter

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IAIA

International Headquarters

1330 23rd Street South, Suite C

Fargo, ND 58103-3705 USA

Phone +1.701.297.7908

Fax +1.701.297.7917

Info@iaia.org • www.iaia.org

Rita R. Hamm, Chief Executive Officer

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Valuation of Ecosystem Services and SEA: Lessons from Influential Cases

The concept of ecosystem services, i.e., the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, has received significant attention since the release of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, yet cases where the valuation of ecosystem services has influenced policies or plans remain scarce. The SEA community has rarely used ecosystem services to translate environment into societal benefits; thus it is difficult to find practical evidence that the ecosystem services concept works in SEA.

Ten cases, several of which used SEA or a similar process, were documented where the recognition, quantification and valuation of ecosystem services have significantly contributed to decision-making by providing better information on the consequences of new policies or planned developments; valuation also resulted in major policy changes or decision-making on strategic plans or investment programmes.


The case study document and synthesis report can be downloaded from the Web site of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (www.eia.nl); the synthesis report is also available in print. • Roel Slootweg, SevS, sevs@sevs.nl • Arend Kolhoff, Netherlands Commission for Impact Assessment, akolhoff@eia.nl • Pieter van Beukering, IVM/Institute for Environmental Studies, pieter.van.beukering@ivm.vu.nl

A Decision-Maker's Tool for Sustainability-Centered Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Decision-Maker's Tool (DM Tool) profiled at IAIA08 is designed to guide strategic environmental assessment (SEA) practitioners step-wise through a typical SEA process, using sustainability-focused questions that culminate in an effective Briefing Note for the Decision Maker (DM). The DM Tool can be used to guide the practitioner through the crucial step of presenting SEA findings in a consistent, relevant and usable form for the DM to determine the best way forward. SEA findings are usually presented to DMs in the form of a Briefing Note, and a well-crafted Briefing Note acts as a "translation tool" for the DM. The tool aims to translate a wide array of technical information and values into a language matching the culture familiar to the DM. The DM Tool is still in a draft phase, and the authors invite IAIA members to review and or test the tool in an actual SEA process. • For more information, contact: Robert Gibson (rbgibson@envmail.uwaterloo.ca), Peter Croal (acdi-cida.gc.ca), Charles Alton (earthlink.net), Susie Brownlie (dbass@icon.co.za), or Erin Windibank (ewindiba@admmail.uwaterloo.ca)



Benefits from ecosystems in Malt: Fishing in inner Niger delta. Photo by Pieter van Beukering.

 Special Topic Meeting
6-9 November 2008
Calgary, Canada
**Assessing and Managing
Cumulative
Environmental Effects**

 **IAIA09**
Accra, Ghana
16-22 May 2009
African Symbol of Unity
and Human Relations

**More conference
news inside!**

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Ethics as a Professional

• Sachihiko Harashina • Tokyo Institute of Technology • Sahara@depe.titech.ac.jp

I stressed ethics in my message in the July issue of the newsletter, which was written after my presidential address at the Annual Conference at Perth in May. At the Annual General Meeting in Perth, we had just passed the Code of Conduct as self-ascribed professional members of IAIA. This action shows that we consider it quite important to make IAIA trusted around the world as a professional society.

To be trusted as experts and members of a professional society, we should behave honestly and neutrally, and provide relevant and unbiased information for decision-making surrounding major human actions that might have big impacts on the environment. The fifth item of the Code of Conduct addresses this issue. We should provide not only accurate scientific information and engineering services for improving sustainability, but also fairly convey the opinions of the people to the decision-makers to support their wise judgments.

Science and technology is a foundation for economic development. One of the major factors of Japanese economic success after World War II was the ability and trustworthiness of engineers. Engineers were appreciated because of their contribution to economic growth at that time. My university, Tokyo Institute of Technology, is known as a university that produces trustworthy engineers. Alumni were educated to have the mindset of "Shokunin Katagi," which in Japanese is an artisan spirit. I think that concept is closely related to "Bushido," or the traditional Japanese Samurai code of conduct. People believed that Samurai should have a high level of ethics, and Samurai were respected because they were quite honest and reliable—not by their swords, but by Bushido.

I would like my colleagues in IAIA to be viewed with the same belief. We should be trusted in each society and also all over the world through our activities. To behave in such a manner, we can utilize our global network of talented people and organizations to help each other.

IAIA Code of Ethics

As a self-ascribed professional member of IAIA, the information and services that I provide must be of the highest quality and reliability. I consequently commit myself:

- To conduct my professional activities with integrity, honesty, and free from any misrepresentation or deliberate bias.
- To conduct my professional activities only in subject areas in which I have competence through education, training, or experience. I will engage, or participate with, other professionals in subject areas where I am less competent.
- To take care that my professional activities promote sustainable and equitable actions as well as a holistic approach to impact assessment.
- To check that all policies, plans, activities, or projects with which I am involved are consistent with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and guidelines.
- To refuse to provide professional services whenever the professional is required to bias the analysis or omit or distort facts in order to arrive at a predetermined finding or result.
- To disclose to employers and clients and in all written reports, any personal or financial interest that could reasonably raise concerns as to a possible conflict of interest.
- To strive to continually improve my professional knowledge and skills and to stay current with new developments in impact assessment and my associated fields of competence.
- To acknowledge the sources I have used in my analysis and the preparation of reports.
- To accept that my name will be removed from the list of self-ascribed professional members of IAIA should I be found to be in breach of this code by a disciplinary task-group constituted by the IAIA Board of Directors to consider any complaint lodged against my professional conduct.

Networking Follow-Up How-To

You meant to follow up with people you met at the IAIA conference...

Maybe you think you're too busy to follow up, or he is too busy to respond. Or maybe you can't find her business card. (They are easy to lose, but you can check your list of participants. Can't find your participants list? Download it from the Web site or contact IAIA HQ.)

It takes only a few minutes to compose a short e-mail. Yes, it is possible that the other person won't remember you or what you discussed. But don't let "what ifs" prevent you from making contact. Set the foundation for follow-up in your e-mail. Comment on the work he or she does, and don't be afraid to ask any details or specifics that you might have forgotten.

Networking is one of the best ways to find new clients, meet potential partners, and discover people who can help you with your work. Take advantage of the network at your fingertips as a member of IAIA. • Rita Hamm • IAIA CEO • rita@iaia.org

... we can utilize our global network of talented people and organizations to help each other.