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Executive Summary

Project objectives

The analysis of potential impacts of new policies before their adoption is a standard tool of governmental practice in industrialised countries. Impact Assessment (IA) - often also referred to as Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) - typically describes a problem, identifies policy measures, assesses possible effects and describes options to achieve the policy objectives in a most efficient way. IAs are usually conducted by the rule-making department. The aim is to improve the overall quality of regulation by rationalising the process of policy making: By making available information on possible costs and benefits and stimulating an early interdepartmental coordination, decision-makers should be enabled to choose the policy option with the greatest benefits and lowest costs.

IA procedures vary from country to country, both regarding the level of institutionalisation and regarding the scope of analysis. Although the traditional objective of reducing regulatory burden is clearly still present - and reinforced in some countries - we observe that in many countries Impact Assessment has been broadened towards an inclusion of generic objectives such as environmental concerns, competitiveness and sustainability. Such an integrated perspective aims to reveal conflicts between objectives and to identify win-win solutions. It further requires the integration between different sectoral assessment procedures. For some years, efforts have been made to establish new forms of integrated IA that allow for a comprehensive assessment of all possible impacts of new legislation, including unintended side effects and the assessment of interlinkages between different issues of concern.

The introduction of these integrated approaches has been met with considerable interest and also great expectations. However, there has also been criticism that the integration of different issues of concern into a single assessment procedure may run the risk of a capacity overload. Another challenge for IA is the development of new forms of governance that complement or substitute traditional regulation. This includes “soft-law” approaches, reflexive assessments, de-regulation, co-regulation or integrative approaches of decision-making. Typically, this kind of regulation allows greater flexibility in implementation to increase the efficiency of regulation and to help utilise knowledge held by target groups. This flexibility, however, makes it more difficult to assess the likely impacts of such regulation. The project analysed which methods are available and suitable for assessing the impacts of these types of policy instruments.

Against this background, the project:

- evaluated the effects of formalised, integrated IA in a comparative perspective,
- analysed the institutional, procedural and substantive requirements for successful IA,
- developed operational quality standards for the conduct of IA, and
- developed recommendations for good practices in the conduct of IA.

Work performed

Progress can be summarised in relation to five key research tasks:

Conceptual framework: An important early task of the project was to integrate explicit and implicit assumptions about relevant factors in a coherent and transparent conceptual framework. Set out in a short report, the conceptual framework defines the dependent and independent variables and summarises key relationships between them in the form of hypotheses (Jacob and Hertin 2007). This work is also based on a review of IA procedures in practice (Jacob 2006a), a review of tools and methods used for IA (Pesch and Kerkhof 2006) carried out in the early stages of the project and a review of literature on the practice of IA in the EU (Adelle and Wilkinson 2006, Mussler and Adelle 2008).

Indicators of IA quality: As a first step towards developing operational quality standards, we have developed a draft set of indicators which aim to capture the process and content of IA as well as its impact on policy (Radaelli, Meuwese et al. 2006). It is based on a thorough review of the relevant literature, particularly IA evaluations and literature on indicators of regulatory quality. The indicators have been revised in the light of empirical findings from country studies, case studies and the survey (Radaelli and Meuwese 2008).

Country fiches: Information on IA procedures has been collected following a common template. The template covers variables relating to the political system, the main features of the IA procedure and the quality and the degree of integration of the IA system. Data sources are the respective national guidelines, OECD reports, academic literature and selected telephone interviews with officers in coordinating units. The data has been collected in close cooperation with the ENBR project.
The country fiches are available on a public website (www.avanzi.org/evia) providing information on the current state of art of Impact Assessment in Europe. Furthermore, the country studies have been subject to comparative analysis (Hertin and Jacob 2008, Hertin et al. 2008).

Case studies: In total, 22 case studies have been performed in UK (5), Denmark (3), Poland (2), Netherlands (3) and the European Commission (7). The five countries were selected because of their extensive experience with policy assessment, while at the same time representing a variety of different approaches of RIA and representing different types of political systems. The selection criteria for the countries were outlined in Meuwese and Radaelli 2006 and in Jacob 2006. In each of the jurisdictions, a range of individual policy cases were selected. The cases were chosen to represent different policy areas and instruments, but include policy initiatives of a certain political and economic significance. The policies should refer to two or more SD issues. The most striking observation when analysing the practice of RIA is the large variability of process and outcome, both between and even within jurisdictions. The variability concerns the process, the timing, the type and quality of knowledge produced and the function of the knowledge in the policy process: We found superficial RIAs done after all major decisions were taken, with the only objective of complying with an administrative

procedure. On the other hand, we also found - sometimes in the same country - excellent pieces of analysis carried out in parallel with the policy development process, analysing rigorously the major intended and unintended effects of different options led to considerable instrumental learning on policy design.

Survey: The objective of the survey was to test and generalise some of the key findings of the case studies and country fiches through larger number of respondents. UK and Netherlands were selected on the basis that the countries should have fairly advanced, integrated IA systems. In addition to this, Germany was included as a country with more informal IA practices for comparative purposes. The Commission was only covered by a stakeholder survey as it has already been extensively researched. The results of the ongoing evaluation study were feed into the comparative analysis of practice in the different jurisdictions.

Dissemination and recommendations: The results of the EVIA project were continuously feed back to an advisory board of officers from the Commission and the Member States. Results and conclusions have been presented on two workshops in Brussels with officers, scientists and other stakeholders. Policy relevant conclusions were summarised in a policy paper (Jacob et al. 2008) that were presented to the public and interested officers on several occasions.

Results

The key results of the 27 country studies, the detailed analysis of 22 concrete policy proposals in five countries and the surveys amongst government officials and stakeholders in three countries and the EU include:

- Impact Assessment has been rapidly adopted in Europe over the last 15 years. Formal procedures for IA exist now in almost every EU Member State. This does not mean, however, that all European countries are actually using this tool in the preparation of legislation and regulation as implementation is very uneven. In some countries, IA only exists on paper. There is a wave of reform in the most recent years.
- Despite formal similarities, the procedures in EU Member States vary enormously with regard to orientation, ambition, institutionalisation and transparency. Some IA systems are broad, others narrow. Some are purely internal administrative procedures, others involve stakeholders. Some focus on preparing a statement or report, others conceived as an iterative process.
- We identified four different ideal types of Impact Assessment that can be distinguished regarding their scope of application, the purposes and procedures. These models can be labelled as full cost assessment, the policy integration model, issue specific assessment and justificatory assessment. Any attempt to compare, evaluate and make recommendations to improve IA therefore needs to be based on an understanding of the functions and characteristics of each procedure. In practice, the various models are often mixed without stating clearly which of the underlying concept dominates.

- The functions and the potentials of IA change during the political process. IA can be used 1) to identify and assess policy options, 2) to fine-tune policies, 3) to engage with other departments and stakeholders and 4) to justify and explain policies. The requirements on the process, the used methods, and the potential outcomes vary and accordingly the criteria to assess their quality have to be adapted.
- The use of IA as an instrument to integrate issues of Sustainable Development in policy making is largely underutilised. There is little political will, and accordingly to little administrative resources, time, budget and skilled personnel. Very few countries explicitly mentioning the goal of SD integration at all. Even in the jurisdictions that have pioneered the inclusion of sustainability issues in IA and that make an explicit reference to sustainable development (UK, Ireland, Netherlands and European Commission), it appears to be difficult in practice to take all relevant aspects into account.
- Many Member States have recently made efforts to go beyond pilot projects and to make their assessment systems more effective. Key trends are increased formalisation of assessment practices, the shift of coordination to core executive units, the introduction of IA units or contact points in individual ministries, the drafting of IA guidelines, the use of regulatory quality indicators, and the introduction of systems to measure administrative burdens arising from regulation.
- Overall, the EU model of comprehensive, integrated assessment including different dimensions of sustainable development is followed in few countries only. Instead, most national assessment procedures focus on direct economic cost and administrative burden. A number of countries recently broadened the scope of application and require now the assessment of all potential impacts.
- In almost all cases we have examined, there is a large gap between requirements set out in official documents and actual Impact Assessment practice. In most countries we found examples of both good and bad practice, but typically assessments are narrow, partial and done at a late stage. In many countries, a large share of proposals is not formally assessed or is assessed with a 'tick box mentality'.
- The use of tools for quantification is far less comprehensive than the guidelines would suggest. Most IAs do not contain any formal analysis except simple cost calculations and narrow assessments of administrative burdens on companies. Although many IAs contain some element of quantification, this is often limited to economic aspects. Social and environmental aspects tend to be expressed qualitatively, some times only described in very general terms. Several EVIA case studies have supported the concern that this can bias the interpretation of results towards the 'hard' economic facts. More systematic quantification is sometimes attempted for high-profile policy proposals expected to have large impacts on important social groups. These are often underpinned by a more thorough assessment to back up positions for the expected policy negotiations. In some of those cases, the analysis was outsourced to external consultants, often leading to methodologically sophisticated qualitative and quantitative assessments. The extent

to which this information is actually used as a basis for decision-making is, however, difficult to determine. Anecdotal evidence suggests also that external studies are more vulnerable to influence by interest groups.

- Previous evaluations emphasise the practical challenges for IA and the need for strong institutions, systematic quality control and sufficient resources. With this project, we have sought to identify the underlying barriers to effective IA, specifically the problematic relationship between assessment and political decision-making; legal, technical and political constraints; administrative cultures and incentive systems; methodological challenges and the inherent limitations of scientific analysis.

Conclusions

Based on these findings, we argue that addressing these structural barriers requires a re-thinking of Impact Assessment - not just in terms of institutions and methods, but also of its functions, processes and limitations. While the diversity of national assessment approaches and contexts makes it impossible to set out simple recommendations that apply in all countries, we propose a number of conclusions for the further development of IA:

- It is legitimate and appropriate that Member States pursue different objectives through IA and that they adapt procedures to suit their national contexts. On the other hand, the multi-level nature of policy-making requires better linkages between IA at different levels. We therefore see a strong potential for the EU as a platform to improve connections between IA at European and at national level, to promote broadening of assessments beyond direct economic costs, and to support efforts to improve implementation. The EU has a role to play in helping clarify what the Member States may expect from this tool and in encouraging governments to systematically support implementation. The adoption of a common set of regulatory quality indicators would be an important step towards understanding the magnitude and effects of the current diversity and to identify areas in which convergence is desirable.
- The trend to move responsibility for IA to higher levels of hierarchy and to introduce central quality control can be a useful strategy to strengthen the procedure. It is, is, however, important that this is complemented with an improvement of administrative capacity. Creating institutions in the core executive is of little value if resources (budget, time and responsibility) for policy formulation and IA are not delivered to departments. Mechanisms for quality control also need to adopt a sufficiently wide notion of 'quality' (including process issues and the full range of impacts covered by the procedure).
- In some countries, the evidence-based dimension of policy formulation is usefully combined with the political dimension of negotiation and bargaining. In others, the fragmentation of the political system makes it difficult to strengthen the role of evidence. IA procedures alone will not change the basic dynamics of political decision-making. If the purpose is to increase the space for evidence-based policy formulation, governments have to appreciate the magnitude of this task and make efforts to make the necessary wide-ranging institutional changes.

- We have often encountered the expectation that there is a clear 'division of labour' between assessment and politics. IA should provide the 'answer' and identify the best policy option, then disappear from the scene to let politicians do the bargaining. In our view, this idea is misleading. IAs do not give a single answer, but frame problems, scope solutions and uncover possible side-effects of policy measures. They do not disappear from the scene, but remain a reference point in political bargaining and support ex post evaluation of policies. In short, IAs should support the decision-making throughout the whole policy cycle.
- Integrating cross cutting issues through IA is a challenging task. On the one hand, a broad scope of the assessment is important to avoid that policies create new problems through the solution of old ones. On the other hand, integration can lead to capacity overload, confusion and irrelevance in the decision process. Ultimately, the right balance cannot be prescribed by guidelines but has to be found in individual assessments. Overall, it seems useful to define an overall broad scope, but to implement it through targeted analytical methods and tools. Rather than pursuing the over-ambitious - and in many cases misleading - objective of full integration in a single methodology, IAs should connect and compare different impacts.

Next steps

The project results and conclusions will be published in a 'Handbook Impact Assessment'. The aim of the book is to provide a broad overview of conceptual foundations of and practical experiences with Impact Assessment (IA). It builds on a unique empirical basis of research on IA procedures and practices in all EU Member States. The book is addressed to both the academic community and to IA practitioners. It does not provide practical guidance for those directly involved in individual assessments, but a source of information and reflection for those studying, designing and implementing IA procedures.

Further dissemination activities include a number of academic papers that are currently under review and the dissemination of the policy paper. Together with other projects in the field of Impact Assessment, a pooling of case studies will be explored.

Dissemination activities

The EVIA project received considerable attention from the very outset within practitioners and researchers. During the two years of the project several activities have been performed to inform other researchers and officers about the EVIA project:

- Results derived from the EVIA project were presented on several scientific conferences and workshops: The findings were presented and discussed at two workshops and a number of papers have been developed out of the EVIA activities, which have been presented at different conferences, published in the paper series of the involved institutes and submitted to peer reviewed journals. The project and papers were presented at an ECPR Conference in Pisa, at University of Göttingen, Cambridge and Vienna. Further the project team prepared a policy paper covering the main findings of the EVIA project. This paper has been

circulated widely and was presented at a public presentation organised by IES in Brussels.

- The EVIA Handbook will be published by Springer shortly. The aim of the book is to provide a broad overview of conceptual foundations of and practical experiences with Impact Assessment (IA). The book is addressed to both the academic community and to IA practitioners. The concept for the book has been peer-reviewed and is accepted by the publisher.
- The webpage with the IA observatory will serve as a platform for future research on Impact Assessment. All reports and all country studies will be available from this page.
- Future disseminations are planned at workshops and conferences in Exeter, Dublin and Berlin. Together with other EU funded IA related projects the possibilities for a pooling of case study data will be explored at a meeting in Exeter.

Contractors involved

- Freie Universität Berlin, Environmental Policy Research Centre (FFU), Germany (coordinator)
- Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), Germany
- The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), UK
- AVANZI, Italy
- Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), Spain
- University of Exeter, Centre for Regulatory Governance, UK
- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM), The Netherlands

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Section 1: Project objectives and major achievements

1.1 General project objectives and relation to the state of the art

The analysis of potential impacts of new policies before their adoption is a standard tool of governmental practice in industrialised countries. Impact Assessment (IA) - often also referred to as Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) - typically describes a problem, identifies policy measures, assesses possible effects and describes options to achieve the policy objectives in a most efficient way. IAs are usually conducted by the rule-making department. The aim is to improve the overall quality of regulation by rationalising the process of policy making: By making available information on possible costs and benefits and stimulating an early interdepartmental coordination so decision-makers are able to choose the policy option with the greatest benefits and lowest costs.

IA procedures vary from country to country, both regarding the level of institutionalisation and regarding the scope of analysis. Although the traditional objective of reducing regulatory burden is clearly still present - and reinforced in some countries - we observe that in many countries Impact Assessment has been broadened towards an inclusion of generic objectives such as environmental concerns, competitiveness and sustainability. Such an integrated perspective aims to reveal conflicts between objectives and to identify win-win solutions. It further requires the integration between different sectoral assessment procedures. For some years, efforts have been made to establish new forms of integrated IA that allow for a comprehensive assessment of all possible impacts of new legislation, including unintended side effects and the assessment of interlinkages between different issues of concern.

The introduction of these integrated approaches has been met with considerable interest and also great expectations. However, there has also been criticism that the integration of different issues of concern into a single assessment procedure may run the risk of a capacity overload. Another challenge for IA is the development of new forms of governance that complement or substitute traditional regulation. This includes “soft-law” approaches, reflexive assessments, de-regulation, co-regulation or integrative approaches of decision-making. Typically, this kind of regulation allows greater flexibility in implementation to increase the efficiency of regulation and to help utilise knowledge held by target groups. This flexibility, however, makes it more difficult to assess the likely impacts of such regulation. The project analysed which methods are available and suitable for assessing the impacts of these types of policy instruments.

Against this background, the project:

- evaluated the effects of formalised, integrated IA in a comparative perspective,
- analysed the institutional, procedural and substantive requirements for successful IA,

- developed operational quality standards for the conduct of IA, and
- developed recommendations for good practices in the conduct of IA.

The project builds on and contributes to the literature on Impact Assessment: The empirically oriented literature on RIA observes a widespread application in the OECD (Radaelli 2004) however, it is not always clear to what extent assessments go beyond a narrow analysis of direct economic and administrative costs. Some comparative studies analyse in how far the IA systems aim to contribute to an integration of environmental aspects into decision-making. According to Jacob and Volkery (2007) this is an explicit goal in the USA, Canada, the UK and the Netherlands. USA and Canada introduced a requirement to assess policy proposals already back in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These procedures, however, were hardly applied (Bartolomeo et al. 2005). In Europe, the UK pioneered the introduction of environmental requirements already back in 1990 (Jordan und Lenschow 2000). The Netherlands developed tools for policy appraisal of proposed legislation in 1994 (the E- und B-Test, see (Marsden 1999)). A comparative analysis that covers also the European system has been published by (Hertin et al. 2007). The rapid diffusion of the European system in several Member States is described in (Ecologic et al. 2007). The focus of this stream of literature is on the systems of IA, the respective purposes and procedures that are foreseen.

There are few evaluations of the practice of integrated IA, and most of them focus on the European Commission's system. The first years of experiences reveal several shortcomings of the process (Wilkinson et al. 2004: ; Renda 2006: ; Bartolomeo et al. 2005: ; Institute for Miljovurdering / Environmental Assessment Institute 2006: ; EEAC Working Group on Governance 2006: ; TEP 2007), see Adelle and Wilkinson (2006) for a comprehensive review:

- IAs are not always performed with sufficient quality regarding potential environmental impacts: In many cases, IA is focused on the intended impacts of a policy, while unintended side effects are not covered sufficiently as for example in the IA on the Services Directive.
- IAs sometimes overemphasise costs compared to benefits of policies: There is a lack of profound methodologies, data but also incentives to assess the benefits of planned policies, in particular regarding non quantifiable and long-term effects.
- The consultation of stakeholders varies considerably, and factual differences need to be taken into account: Environmental organisations often lack the resources for an adequate involvement in the process, which leads to an overrepresentation of industry. IA may also open up opportunities for early lobbying if not carefully designed.
- The principle of proportionality is not sufficiently defined: The selection of policy options, the scope of the assessment and the definition of boundaries of IA can be misused to neglect environmental aspects (or other unwanted issues) at an early point of time in the design of the IA.
- IAs do not always cover appropriately likely modifications at later stages of the decision making process and implementation in Member States.

The EVIA project contributes to this literature in several regards: While the recent literature places much emphasis on studying IA in the European Commission and selected pioneer

countries (US, Australia, UK), EVIA covers all 27 EU Member States. Rather than focusing on an evaluation of reports through a scorecard method - the method that currently dominates the literature - EVIA describes the procedures in depth, evaluates assessment practice through detailed case studies and explores the perceptions of key actors through surveys. These methods allow us to take procedural aspects of IA into consideration and to evaluate the extent to which IAs have an actual impacts on policy decisions. The data feeds into an 'IA observatory' that gives a broad overview on practice in the Member States, including recent reform efforts.

1.2 Work performed, contractors involved and main achievements

Contractors involved

- Freie Universität Berlin, Environmental Policy Research Centre (FFU), Germany
- Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), Germany
- The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), UK
- AVANZI, Italy
- Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS), Spain
- University of Exeter, Centre for Regulatory Governance, UK
- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM), Netherlands

The research carried out in the EVIA project can be summarised in relation to the conceptual framework, country fiches, case studies and surveys:

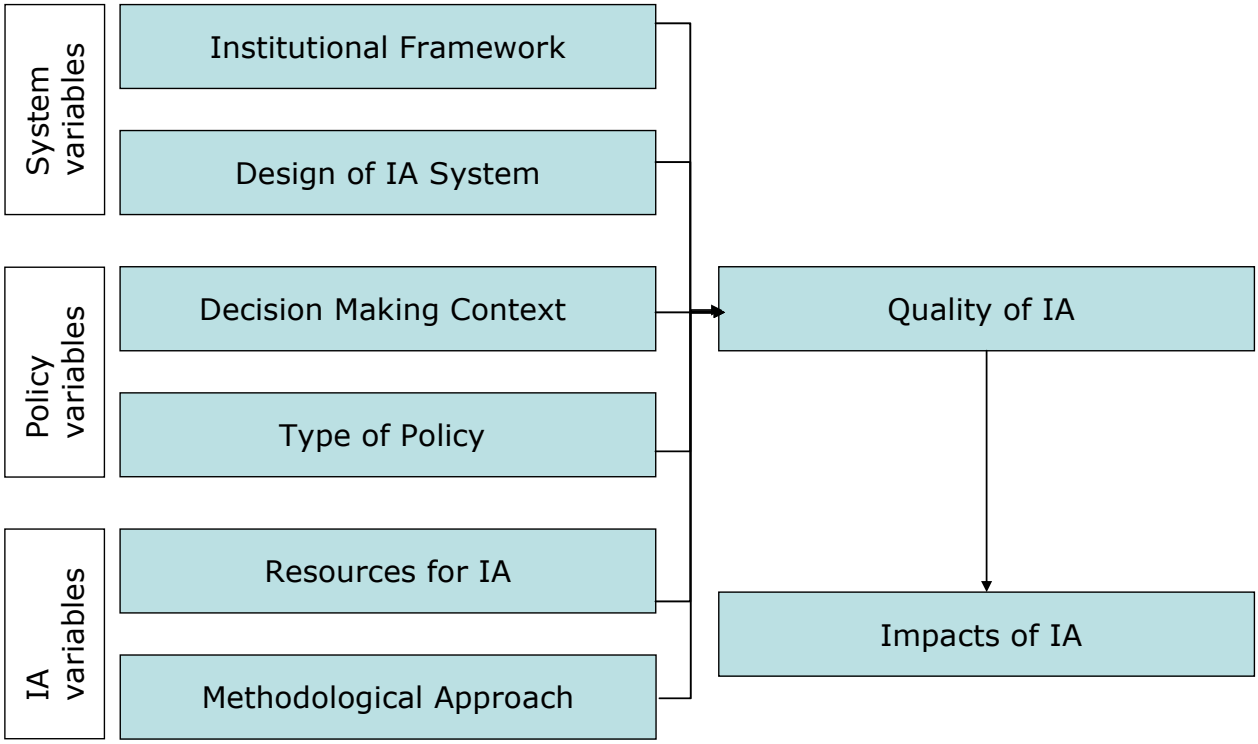
Conceptual framework

An important early task of the project was to integrate explicit and implicit assumptions about relevant factors in a coherent and transparent conceptual framework. Set out in a short report, the conceptual framework defines the dependent and independent variables and summarises key relationships between them in the form of hypotheses (Jacob and Hertin 2007). This work is also based on a review of IA procedures in practice (Jacob 2006a), a review of tools and methods used for IA (Pesch and Kerkhof 2006) and a review of literature and practice of IA at the EU level (Adelle and Wilkinson 2006) carried out in the early stages of the project.

Much of the IA literature takes a narrow view on the challenge of improving the use of policy analysis in the legislative process. It is typically focused on evaluating and improving the quality of assessment and its evidence-base, often through more extensive use of tools and methodologies. It also typically assumes that IA should follow a uniform procedure modelled on a rational problem-solving cycle. Recommendations tend to emphasise the need for more resources, better training and stronger political leadership.

While not denying the importance of these factors, the EVIA project takes a broader view to understand the functioning of IA in different institutional contexts and applied to different types of policies. We expect the quality of IAs and the resulting impact on policy decisions to

be a result of different groups of variables within the institutional framework of decision-making, the design of the IA system, the decision-making context, the type of policy, resources available and the use of analytical methodologies.



The independent variables can be divided into three different groups according to their relative stability, the scope for change and influence and the level at which we expect to find variation: a systemic level which is rarely and slowly changing, a policy level, i.e. the specific proposal and the context of an individual policy and thirdly the specific setup of an IA.

Dependent variables are the quality of IA and its impact on policy. One of the important outcomes of the project is to define these concepts in more specific and operational terms using indicators (Radaelli, Meuwese et al. 2006). It is already clear, however, that our concept of quality will need to go beyond the IA report alone and cover the IA process as a whole. We look specifically at the following aspects: Does the process contribute to an integration of cross-cutting issues into the assessment?, is the integration of cross-cutting issues made explicit?, is the IA elaborated and scientifically grounded?, and is the IA transparent and open for stakeholder involvement?. For each of these issue areas, a set of indicators and related sub-questions are formulated (Jacob and Hertin 2007).

As a first step towards developing operational quality standards, we have developed a draft set of EVIA indicators which aim to capture the process and content of IA as well as its impact on policy (Radaelli, Meuwese et al. 2006). It is based on a thorough review of the relevant literature, particularly IA evaluations and literature on indicators of regulatory quality. Furthermore, indicators to measure the consideration of aspects of sustainable development were taken into account. The indicators have been revised in the light of empirical findings and the resulting modification to the conceptual framework and to the definition of what constitutes a 'good' IA.

Many IA evaluations so far focus on the quality of assessment reports - for example their scope, level of detail and methodological rigour - not least because it can be easily analysed on the basis of a document review. Empirical research has shown, however, that high-quality analysis is not a guarantee for impact on decision-making as it is not uncommon that IA reports are prepared at a late stage in the decision process. It is, therefore, important to evaluate the process as a whole. The empirical research agenda of the project comprises three parts: country fiches, case studies and a survey.

Country fiches

Information on IA procedures has been collected for all Member States following a common template. During the first reporting period, data was collected and draft 'country fiches' were prepared for EU-25. During the second reporting period, additional research was conducted in the new Member States Romania and Bulgaria, and all country fiches were revised, updated and finalised.

The country fiches follow a common approach:

- The first part describes to the broader institutional and political framework in Member States. Variables cover the type of political system, the degree of federalism, strength of judicial review, the strength of interest groups and the regulatory policy in place. The information gathered in this first section is based on existing data sets in the political science literature.
- The second part sets out the institutional design of the IA systems. It summarises the general orientation of the IA procedure, whether it has explicit objectives, its scope, bindingness as well as the role and resources of IA coordination units in government.
- The third part deals with the practice of Impact Assessment, both as prescribed in guidelines and as observed in everyday policy-making. The following issues are addressed: the number of IAs carried out, the scope of analysis (including the consideration of sustainability issues), the degree of cooperation with other departments and other governance levels, the timing, involvement of stakeholders, transparency, methods used and the extent to which guidelines are implemented.

The main outputs of the project in relation to the country fiches are:

- the European Observatory on Impact Assessment (http://www.avanzi.org/evia/) which gives access to detailed information about IA procedures, activities, reforms and responsibilities in all 27 EU Member States
- a data set (in Excel) compiling data on the 27 IA systems
- A comparative analysis of the IA systems and trends in the countries,
- a number of written outputs discussing policy options and recommendations (e.g. EVIA Policy Paper and EVIA Handbook)

Overall, the review of IA systems in the EU-27 shows a comprehensive trend to reform the systems of rule making. In a number of Member States, efforts are under way to strengthen

or extend existing systems of RIA or to introduce new procedures. Only five countries (Austria, Cyprus, Greece, Luxemburg and Malta) have no IA procedure in place. The research shows that the diffusion process evolved fairly steadily over the last 25 years, with roughly one EU Member State adopting an IA procedure each year. On the other hand, the analysis shows that the focus of IA often remains very narrow and that there continues to be a serious lack of implementation. IA practice is often characterised by late timing, little quantification, little weighting up of trade-offs and a lack of transparency. The proliferation of formal procedures cannot be taken as a reliable indicator of a genuine spread of actual IA practices across Europe.

Case studies

In total, 22 case studies have been performed in UK (5), Denmark (3), Poland (2), Netherlands (3) and the European Commission (7). Two additional case studies in the Netherlands and in Poland were begun, but as responsible officers were not available for a long period of time and other sources of information were not available the cases could not be included in the final analysis.

The five countries were selected because of their fairly extensive experience with policy assessment, while at the same time representing a variety of different approaches of RIA and representing different types of political and economic systems. In each of the jurisdictions, a range of individual policy cases were selected. The cases were chosen to represent different policy areas and instruments, but include policy initiatives of a certain political and economic significance. A certain bias may arise from the selection of countries: We have selected those which have a number of years of experience with RIA and a certain level of practice to ensure the presence of assessment activities that can be studied. These criteria limited the number of countries as RIA requirements have often been only recently introduced or implementation remains rudimentary. This bias towards well-performing countries is, however, less problematic as the barriers to RIA identified in these jurisdictions are likely to occur also in others. A second bias may occur regarding the selection of cases: It can be assumed that the willingness of individual desk officers to be interviewed is usually higher in relation to RIAs that were judged to be successful in terms of both quality of analysis and policy impact. Furthermore, the identification of cases tended to start from adopted policies, thereby IAs which contributed to an abandoning of the planned policies were not considered. As a result of these biases, the case studies may draw an overly positive picture of RIA. While not drawing a representative picture, our analysis provides valuable insights into the functions of policy assessment in policy-making and into the factors influencing them.

The most striking observation when analysing the practice of RIA is the large variability of process and outcome, both between and even within jurisdictions. The variability concerns the process, the timing, the type and quality of knowledge produced and the function of the knowledge in the policy process: We found superficial RIAs done after all major decisions were taken, with the only objective of complying with an administrative procedure. On the other hand, we also found - sometimes in the same country - excellent pieces of analysis carried out in parallel with the policy development process, analysing rigorously the major

intended and unintended effects of different options led to considerable instrumental learning on policy design. While a certain heterogeneity in terms of process, quality and impact may be expected, we surprisingly found that the relationship between those variables is also far from consistent: Some of the studied RIA reports were well-written and rigorously researched but interviews showed that they served the function of justifying a previously taken decision and have very little impact on the decision (except, perhaps, in the sense of creating political support for the preferred policy option). In another case we found that a fairly simple RIA that was narrowly focused on administrative costs turned out to be influential in changing the design of the policy. What is also clearly visible from the 22 case studies is that conformity of RIA practice with - or even resemblance to - the process described by jurisdictional guidance documents is the exception rather than the norm.

The shortcomings of IA in practice compared to the expectations as expressed in the guidelines have to be attributed to several factors. There is a lack of discretion for officers to analyse alternative options due to predetermination of the policy in the hierarchy or by other political institutions, the resources in particular regarding time are insufficient, there is a lack of budget, data and skilled staff.

Regarding the consideration of SD aspects in the IA process, we found a lack of high level support, limited stakeholder involvement, limited or conflictual relationships among departments, lack of time and resources, difficulties to combine qualitative and quantitative information and a lack of skills. However, experience in the European Commission shows that in most of the cases the various issue areas have been taken into consideration if relevant. This is an indication for the potentials of IA as a tool to integrate cross cutting issues in policy-making.

The case studies were mainly analysed in two regards: 1) How can quality of Impact Assessment be measured and what the determinants of good quality are. 2) In how far aspects of sustainable development are taken into consideration during the IA and what factors promoting or inhibiting such considerations are.

The case studies clearly suggest that it is not possible to define a single concept of quality for IA. The definition of quality may, however, be based on the different functions designed to the IA. In the following, we summarise some of the typical roles/functions of IA.

- Identification and selection of policy options: In case of completely open situations for the development of a new policy proposal, the IA can be used to identify options for a given problem or a given objective. Policies can be defined and developed from scratch. In these cases, IA provides a framework to discuss different policy instruments to achieve the objective and to develop the initial conceptual basis for a policy proposal. This may be used for a discussion of these ideas within the hierarchy of the department or for a first interdepartmental discussion. The room for manoeuvre is large in this situation and the policy is predetermined only to a limited degree.
- Policy fine-tuning. The more typical case is the situation in which the basic policy decisions are taken and the objectives and problems to be tackled are more defined.

The function of IA in this case is to collect information about the concrete design of the policy. The scope of the IA in this case is much narrower.

- IA as a means to engage stakeholders. A third function is the use of the IA as a framework for collecting and discussing information about a planned policy. In our cases we can distinguish between different stakeholders and functions of the IA in this context. IA is used firstly to consult other departments, to collect data and to negotiate the proposal. There are also cases in which the same holds true for the consultation with non governmental stakeholders.
- Explaining and justifying policies. A fourth function that is identifiable within our case studies is the use of the IA to explain, to justify or to legitimise policies. Unlike the consultation, the decisions are taken and the IA is finalised. While a piece of legislation might be very technical and complicated, the IA report provides an opportunity to explain the rationales and the means of the planned policy.

Obviously, there is no single concept of quality that fits to all of the different functions of Impact Assessment. Instead, a more differentiated view is necessary that takes into account the different purposes and potentials of Impact Assessment within this framework. We can therefore use the following table to explore the possible relationships between roles/functions of IA and quality aspects.

	Quality: Process	Quality: Purpose	Quality: Openness	Quality: Sophistication
Identification and selection of policy options	*- Early in timing* *-Interdepartmental cooperation* *-Procedure integration* *-Powerful Central-Coordination Unit*	*-Broader scope* *-Benefit identification* *-Alternatives assessment* *-SD issues consideration*	*-Informal and simplified consultation* *-Effective and early involvement* *-Key actors and expert meetings*	*- Internal time, skills adequate* *-I- depth qualitative analysis*
Policy fine-tuning	*- IA based on a proposal* *- Vertical integration* *- Interdepartmental antagonistic mode*	*-Narrower scope* *-Administrative burdens measuring* *-Alternatives assessment* *-Trade-offs discussion*	*- On-going and limited involvement* *-Informal consultation* *-Key actors and business interviews*	*-Evidence based* *-Quantification of impacts* *-Methods and tools (CBA, SCM)* *-External expertise*
IA as a means to engage stakeholders	*- Early or based on a policy proposal* *- Interdepartmental cooperation* *-Procedure and vertical integration*	*- Integration of SD issues* *-Substantive consideration of SD pillars* *-Side effects and long terms impacts*	*-Effective engagement* *- Knowledge exchange* *- New knowledge production via interaction* *- Conflict smoothing* *-Formal and informal methods* *- Survey and Focus groups*	*-Evidence based* *-Balanced quantitative and qualitative analysis* *-Time, skill adequate for the consultation process*
Explaining and justifying policies	*-Late in timing* *-Vertical integration*	*- Narrower scope* *-Cost and benefit identification*	*-Late and Formal consultation* *-Information and notice*	*-Adequate level of quantification* *-Benefit evaluation* *- Distributional effect consideration*

Table 3: different IA quality according to different functions

We have observed a higher quality in terms of all four aspects for IAs aiming at identifying and selecting policy options from scratch, even if sometimes, if policy issues are really new, forms of quantification can be difficult to design and implement.

In the fine-tuning of policies, on the contrary, sophistication of the analysis is seen as necessary, because the relative difference between policy options is very narrow and therefore choices over different courses of action should be precisely grounded and the possible costs and benefits of each one should be thoroughly explored.

Moreover, in the case of IA as a means to engage stakeholders' openness quality is also linked to the exchange of knowledge and production of shared knowledge via interaction.

Finally, if the role is to explain and justify a policy, we can expect that the accent should be put again on sophistication of the analysis and on consultation methods (even if in this case they can be seen more as public relations tools).

Survey

The aim of the survey was to test and generalise some of the key findings of the case studies and country fiches through larger number of respondents. Gaining insights into the practice of policy making and the role of Impact Assessment in the surveyed countries, the surveys particularly aimed to identify determinants of quality, quantification and the use of methods. The first survey addressed desk officers in three different jurisdictions – Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, whereas the second survey addressed stakeholders in four jurisdictions – the European Union in addition to the previous mentioned.

The officer survey was conducted on the basis of the results of case studies from the EVIA project and was stimulated by the empirical research agenda developed by Jacob and Hertin (2007). The main focus lies on the degree of quantification of impacts regarding the three different pillars of Sustainable Development (economic, social and environmental), the use of methods and its potential constraints (e.g. lack of data and/or resources). The EVIA project has chosen this perspective, since monetary evaluation is often considered as "one of the most developed ways of integrating environmental, economic and social concerns" (IMV 2006: 23). In practice, however, "it is a question open to investigation if this [quantification] contributes to an integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development or if this narrows down the perspective on costs for business only" (Jacob undHertin 2007).

The officer survey supports the hypothesis that many IAs suffer from a weak consideration of potential environmental impacts or unintended side effects. In nearly half of the cases, where environmental impacts were expected, they were not evaluated. This result may be connected with the observation that IAs tend to overemphasise costs compared to benefits. There are a considerable number of cases where potential costs are evaluated with more sophisticated methods than benefits.

Moreover, the officer survey gives some empirical evidence that the quality of IAs can be expected to depend on the resources available. Resources for assistance which are covered by the survey are IA guidance documents and support from IA co-ordination units. Both the use of IA guidance documents and support from a co-ordination unit seem to lead to either more quantification of costs (including environmental costs) or to a better distinction between one-off costs and recurring costs. Furthermore, in the observed sample the quantification of potential impacts increases depending on whether the responsible officer did receive any training on how to carry out IAs. According to the TEP results, all these factors are likewise important on the EU level.

The stakeholder survey was also conducted on the basis of the results of case studies from the EVIA project. While the choice of the most adequate method for impact assessment is debated among researchers, the question addressed here is how the answer differs among stakeholders. Do they believe that quantitative methods and cost-benefit-analysis will improve the quality of impact assessments, or do they fear that such methods may bias the results towards an assessment of economic impacts? Moreover, it is often said that the consultation of stakeholders in a process of impact assessment varies considerably, e.g. that "environmental organisations often lack the resources for an adequate involvement in the process, which leads to an overrepresentation of industry" (Jacob and Hertin 2007; p. 12).

The stakeholder survey identified differences between the areas of activity and that stakeholders with economic and international backgrounds are more systematically involved. Furthermore, the type of organisation seems to play a role in this regard. We observed an overrepresentation of industry, but not due to a lack of resources but to missing opportunities for involvement of NGOs. The variation in our sample, however, is too small to produce strong evidence.

The surveys show that a majority of both stakeholders and desk officers think that quantification generally increases the usefulness of IAs. But in terms of monetisation, desk officers are more critical than stakeholders. Most of them think that monetisation is not always appropriate. This is an interesting result, and an interpretation may be that stakeholders want to see that impacts in their specific areas of interest – economic, environmental and social impacts – are subject of evaluation. The officer may however be more experienced with the limitations of the corresponding methodologies.

1.3 Problems encountered and corrective action taken

Overall, the project makes good progress and no major problems were encountered. However, we made a number of smaller adjustments:

1) Integrating the conceptual framework: During the preparation of the various conceptual papers (templates for case studies, for country fiches, questionnaires, the review of models and tools, the IA practice in the Commission, the development of indicators, etc.) the consortium developed a number of assumptions and hypotheses about the factors that influence the outcome and the impact of IA. To make this explicit and to develop a comprehensive framework, we have drafted a paper setting out the underlying hypotheses (additional deliverable D1.7).

2) Overlaps with other projects: There are several other projects under way that have similar research interests. To avoid the duplication of work and in particular the approaching of officers with requests for interviews, contacts were established with the other European projects on Impact Assessment. On occasion of the kick-off-meeting of EVIA, these projects were invited to present the respective approaches, to agree on the exchange of data and to discuss about potential joint activities in the field. An email list was set up and a password protected web site was established. An exchange of data was possible in particular with

MATISSE, SENSOR and ENBR. EVIA draws on the results from Sustainability A-Test (methods and tools) and IQ TOOLS (IA resources).

3) Overlap with the evaluation commissioned by SecGen: Parallel to the EVIA project, the Commission contracted the UK consultant TEP with an independent evaluation of the IA system. The members in the Advisory Board representing the Commission had strongly expressed the view that the various evaluations of the EU IA system meant not only that much was already known on this, but also that a desk officer survey in the European Commission would get a low response rate due to the frequent similar request. Thus, the EVIA team was recommended to focus more on the Member State level as there is less knowledge available. Further, it was recommended to include a country with fewer experiences in formalised IA in their preparation of legislation. The EVIA team decided to focus the desk officer survey on UK and the Netherlands and included Germany as an example for a country with (up to now) lower implementation of formalised IA. Furthermore, additional representatives from Member States were invited to become member of the Advisory Board. Case studies and the stakeholder survey were, however, retained at the EU level. The EVIA team asked for access to the TEP data and methodology, but the Commission decided not to disclose any data before the official release of results expected in spring 2007.

4) The overlaps with the TEP evaluation of the IA system of the European Commission further resulted in the advice by our Advisory Board to not include the EU system in the officer survey. Consequently, no questionnaire and survey of the European Commission were conducted.

5) The relatively limited number of respondents in the desk officer surveys meant that it was not useful to prepare country-specific analyses for each jurisdiction. Accordingly, the project team focused on the comparative analysis and referred to national differences only in relation to specific issues.

6) Two case studies could not be considered in the analysis as officers were not available for interviews despite of continuous efforts to contact them. Other sources of information were not sufficient to include the cases in the analysis. However, the project team does not believe that the two cases would have changed the overall findings.

7) During the preparation of the project, Bulgaria and Rumania were not Members of the European Union and there were only 25 country studies foreseen. Both new Member States were included in the second round of country studies and the IA observatory. In total 27 country studies were delivered (compared to 25 in the proposal).

Section 2: Workpackage progress

WP 1: Framework

Objectives

The aim of this work package was the development of a common evaluation framework for the empirical investigation of integrated Impact Assessments. The work package is divided into four sub tasks each of which has its own specific objectives:

WP1A: Survey of procedures for integrated IA at the national level

- To provide an overview on the state of the art regarding the practical application of IA
- To provide an overview on the institutionalisation of IA in the MS
- To shortlist candidate countries for the in-depth analysis

WP1B: Survey and classification of IA at the European level

- To provide an overview of IA at EU level and in selected countries regarding operational standards, policy issues and methods applied

WP1C: Development of a preliminary set of indicators for the quality of IA

- To develop a set of preliminary indicators for the assessment of the quality of IA on the basis of a review of literature

WP1D: Survey and classification of methods for IA

- To provide an overview on methods and tools, which are actually used for IA and to develop a typology for such tools

Progress towards objectives

WP1A: A review of the relevant literature has provided an overview of IA systems and activities that informed the selection of countries for WP2A and WP2B. It included a review of types of IA systems in Member States and of different institutional contexts relating to political and administrative systems. The results are summarised in D1.1 and D1.3. Drawing on these results, we have also developed an overall research framework for the EVIA project and its empirical work which is presented in D1.6.

WP1B: An overview of IA at the European level informed the approach to and selection of case studies (WP2A) in the Commission. As the Advisory Board strongly advised against carrying out a survey (WP3) in the European Commission (see section 1.3), the review of EU IAs had to be less comprehensive than initially planned. The opportunity was taken to study in greater detail differences in the IA culture among the various services of the Commission. The results are summarised in D1.2.

WP1C: Indicators were reviewed and a set of EVIA indicators put together. The results - which will be further refined on the basis of case study and survey results - are summarised in D1.4.

WP1D: A typology of methods and tools used in IA was developed and will inform the empirical research in WP2A, WP2B and WP3. The results are summarised in D1.5.

Deliverables

No.	Deliverable title	Type	Month due	Status/foreseen delivery date
D1.1	Survey of literature on IA	Report	4	Completed
D1.2	Survey of IA in the EU	Report	4	Completed
D1.3	Survey of IA in selected countries	Report	7	Completed
D1.4	Report on Indicators for Regulatory Quality	Report	5	Completed
D1.5	Survey on Methods for IA	Report	4	Completed
D1.6	Research framework for case studies	Report	5	Completed
D1.7	EVIA conceptual framework	Report	*additional*	Completed

Milestones

No.	Milestone title	Status/foreseen achievement date
M1.1	Selection of countries for case studies and survey	Completed

WP 2: Case Studies and European Observatory on Impact Assessment

Objectives

The main objective of this work package was 1) to investigate in detail the practice of Impact Assessment in selected countries and for selected policies and 2) to establish a European Observatory for IA.

In case studies, the outcomes of IAs on different types of regulation should be studied in detail. The effects of IAs should be analysed in relationship to the overall institutional setting, the methods and tools that were used, and the types of policies that have been subject of an IA. Furthermore, a comprehensive database (IA Observatory, with 27 country fiches for all EU countries and the European Union itself) on the activities on IA will be set up and made available via a web site.

The case studies investigate the process of IA and aim to identify the determinants of successful IA. It is analysed in detail how the institutional setting influences the conduct of IA, how IA procedures are embedded in the political process, and which objectives are pursued by the involved actors; it is also be discussed if and how particular influences need to be attributed to the choice of instruments.

Progress towards objectives

WP2A: Case studies on specific Impact Assessments
The work conducted in the first reporting period was focused on the elaboration of a case study template, the selection of case studies to be analysed and the analysis of case studies. Regarding the template, the activity has involved an in-depth discussion on the key variables to be covered by the case studies (trying, at the same time, to master synergies with WP2B and the survey).

As far as the selection of cases is concerned the work has been iterative in order to comply with an 'ideal' framework of analysis and, at the same time, with the availability and interest of interviewees.
In the second reporting period, the work consisted of:

- Further identification of cases. This task was more difficult than expected due to the lack of availability of some desk officers. In addition, the overlap with the TEP project, created concern, among EU officials, in terms of excessive workload and case studies fatigue. In other countries, such as Denmark, the lack of a single knowledge centre for IA made it difficult to select appropriate cases. In the final selection of cases, the criteria set in advance (i.a. diversity, coverage of at least two pillars) were complied.
- Refinement of the template. The template was improved in order to align it with a newly issued hypothesis paper. The hypotheses paper became the main source for identifying specific objectives and knowledge gaps to be covered by case studies.
- Test cases. Two tests were made in order to check the consistency of the methodology and clarify ambiguities in the template. No major change needs emerged from this test.
- The implementation of case studies. Regarding the implementation of case studies, 22 case studies were completed, while in two case studies the responsible officers were not available.

WP2B: Case studies on implementation of IA at the level of EU Member States

The key objective of this work package was to analyse the practice of Impact Assessment in all EU Member States and the European Commission. The country studies ('country fiches') follow a common template and gather qualitative information as well as qualitative and quantitative indicators on institutional and political frameworks, the institutional design of the IA systems and the practice of Impact Assessment.

All country fiches were finalized in the course of the second reporting period. Overall, it was possible to collect data on almost all indicators in almost all countries and the data quality appears to be fairly good. The data sources varied somewhat between jurisdiction depending on the availability of existing evaluation studies and on the accessibility of interviewees. In most countries, sources included:

- OECD studies on better regulation and Regulatory Impact Assessment (e.g. OECD 1997, 2002 and 2004)
- national and comparative evaluation reports by academic researchers, consultants and national institutions (see chapter 6 of EVIA Handbook for a review of major studies)
- relevant policy documents, particularly IA guidelines and strategy documents
- a sample of IA reports or summaries (where these are publicly available)
- selected face-to-face or telephone interviews with government officials working in IA coordination units

Where possible, the country studies were reviewed and validated by a national expert, often from within an IA coordination unit. Overall, the country fiches gather and compile existing information about IA systems across the EU. They largely consisted of secondary research which in some countries limits the amount of information on actual IA practice. This is because most countries do not carry out systematic quality control, review or evaluation processes. The data on selected indicators (e.g. number of IAs carried out) is therefore incomplete or in different formats that cannot be directly compared.

WP2C: Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis of case studies was done on the basis of two different requirements. Firstly, the exploitation of the case studies derived information in order to better answer to project hypotheses and identify emerging issues. Secondly, the analysis took into consideration the relationship between IA and sustainable development, an important feature when discussing effects of impact assessment.

The analysis has therefore generated two different reports:

The first focuses only on case studies and tries to identify the most important variables that influence the quality of IA (the concept of quality of IA was developed as part of another work package). The overall result can be summarised by the statement that there is not one single desired concept of quality, but quality is very much related to attribution of a given function to the IA. The paper identifies four functions (and combines the functions with the four attributes of quality):

- Identification and selection of policy options: in the development of a new policy proposal, the IA can be used to identify options
- Policy fine-tuning: if the basic policy decisions are taken, the objectives and the problem to be tackled are more thoroughly defined. The function of IA in this case is to work on the concrete design of the policy. The scope of the IA in this case is much narrower
- IA as a means to engage stakeholders: IA as a framework for collecting and discussing information about a planned policy
- Explaining and justifying policies: the use of the IA is to explain, to justify or to legitimise policies

A second analysis has focused the attention on the issue of sustainable development, in particular on the relationship between IA and SD. The report combines case studies and country fiches and classifies countries in three different clusters, but also looks at very practical implementation problems. At the level of national systems, three clusters have been identified:

- Sustainability pioneers. Countries part of this group have adopted a system very focused on SD integration since its inception of the IA framework
- Integration-oriented systems without explicit SD focus. In countries belonging to this cluster, integration objective is not new and represents one of the main challenges of the system. But integration remains one of the objectives of the IA

system and its implementation (the most important ones remaining competitiveness and reduction of costs for firms and citizens)

- Competition and simplification focus: This group is by far the largest and it contains countries where impact assessment has been conceived as a procedure driven by competitiveness, simplification and administrative costs reduction. In these countries, the Lisbon agenda has very much shaped the IA practice

The overall result is that integration of sustainable development is very much dependent on contextual factors and high level support, rather than on the design of the system and the content of IA guidelines.

WP2D: The European Observatory on IA

The European Observatory on IA is a web site made of a series of web pages containing, in a user-friendly format, the country fiches content and other selected project reports. For this purposes, all the country fiches have been:

- reviewed
- proof read by an English native speaker
- Re-formatted
- Uploaded in pdf with sections of html pages

The architecture of the site allows an easy maintenance and transfer to other sites if necessary.

The European Observatory is available on a FFU and Avanzi webpage

Deliverables

No.	Deliverable title	Type	Month due	Status/foreseen delivery date
D2.1	EU case studies (country fiches)	Report	13	Completed
D 2.2	Country case studies	Report	13	Completed
D2.3	Comparative Analysis	Report	15	Completed

Milestones

No.	Milestone title	Status/foreseen achievement date
M2.1	Concept of The European Observatory on Impact Assessment	Completed
M2.2	Case studies template Case studies completion	Completed
M2.3	Case studies on European Member States IA (Country fiches)	Completed

M2.4	Report on the analysis of Impact Assessments	Completed
M2.5	Creation and launch of the web site	Completed
M2.6	Publication of the first report of the European Observatory on IA	Completed

WP 3: Survey

Objectives

The aim of this work package was to carry out a survey that generalizes and partly quantifies the results of the country fiches and the case studies. The work package is divided into three different sub-tasks each of which has its own specific objectives:

- WP3A: Survey design
- Identification of target persons for interviews based on information from the observatory
- Identification of stakeholders involved in particular IA
- Development of two questionnaires on the basis of the results of the case studies and country fiches
- Pretests with 5 – 10 interviews
- WP3B: Field phase of survey
- To survey perceptions and opinions of stakeholders and officers about impact assessment procedures in Europe (stakeholders only) and in three countries
- To achieve a high return rate (40-50 for Europe and each country) in the survey among officials and stakeholders actively involved in specific IA
- WP3C: Analysis of survey data
- Preparation of data
- Statistical separate analysis of results for EU and each country under analysis
- Statistical cross-country comparison
- Use of econonometric approaches (bivariate logit and probit models)

3.2 Progress towards objectives

WP3A: Survey design

The collection of addresses for the survey was completed:

- Addresses of officers (M 3.1): Addresses of officers in British and Dutch departments and agencies were provided by members of our Advisory Board.

- Addresses of stakeholders (M 3.2): Lists of addresses for the UK and the Netherlands have been collected by the respective partners (University of Exeter and IVM).

After the pre-test had been carried out, the survey questionnaires (D 3.1 and D 3.3) were finalised and translated into Dutch and German. Finally, the online-versions of the questionnaires were implemented.

WP3B: Field work

The links to the online-questionnaires were sent out in May 2007 by e-mail to responsible IA officers in the three respective countries (UK, Netherlands and Germany) and to stakeholders in the same countries and the European Union. On request, a paper version of the officer questionnaire was made available. Due to the low response rate we sent two reminders by e-mail (officers and stakeholders) and, additionally, contacted some potential respondents by phone (officers). The field phase was finished at the end of July. Two databases emerged (M 3.3): one contains information from 62 completely filled in officer questionnaires, and one contains information from 73 completely filled in stakeholder questionnaires.

WP3C: Data analysis

The data from the questioning was collected, coded and formatted for the data analysis.

The survey data was analysed descriptively regarding potential differences between the surveyed countries and regarding several hypotheses. Furthermore, a comparison of the EVIA survey results and relevant results of the TEP study ('Evaluation of the Commission's Impact Assessment System') were carried out.

The findings and results of these analyses were documented in an officer survey report (D 3.7) and a stakeholder survey report (D 3.4). Due to the few respondents from the single jurisdictions in our officer survey it would have been inadequate to draft national surveys (D 3.6) – instead we focused on the comparative analysis (D 3.7) and refer there to national findings. Moreover, due to the small sample size the application of discrete choice models were not appropriate.

3.3.3 Deliverables

No.	Deliverable title	Type	Month due	Status
D 3.1	Questionnaire stakeholder	Report	12	Completed
D 3.2	Questionnaire EU	Report	16	not foreseen (see section 1.3)
D 3.3	Questionnaire national	Report	16	completed
D 3.4	Stakeholder	Report	14	completed

No.	Deliverable title	Type	Month due	Status
	survey			
D 3.5	EU survey	Report	22	not foreseen (see section 1.3)
D 3.6	National surveys	Report	22	not feasible (see section 1.3)
D 3.7	Comparative analysis	Report	22	completed

3.3.4 Milestones

No.	Milestone title	Status
M 3.1	List with name and e-mail addresses of officers for all interviews	completed
M 3.2	Selection of stakeholders for the specific survey	completed
M 3.3	Database containing information from 150 interviews with responsible IA officers and stakeholders	completed

WP 4: Integration and dissemination

Objectives

The purpose of this work package was to integrate the results of the empirical research undertaken in earlier work packages; to engage in continuous feedback with IA practitioners in the Member States and the Commission and to disseminate the outputs from the project. The achievement of these objectives is attained through two sub-tasks:

WP4A: Advisory Board and Workshops

- The establishment of an Advisory Board (AB) of external experts and practitioners, and the maintenance of regular contact between the AB and the project team;
- The organisation of two wider workshops to discuss and comment on the empirical work of the project, and endorse the draft Handbook on good practices in IA (WP4B).

WP4B: Handbook and Good Practices

- The production of a Handbook in an accessible style and format, identifying examples of where IAs have had a demonstrable effect on policy outputs and outcomes, and highlighting the link between effectiveness and specific institutional frameworks and types of policy instruments

Progress towards objectives

WP 4A: Workshops

The first EVIA Worksop was held at Scotland House in Brussels on 19 June 2007. The workshop was attended by 29 participants, who included (in addition to the project team), seven members of the Advisory Board and eight representatives of research institutes. The aim of the workshop was to get feedback on the ongoing conceptual and empirical work of the EVIA project and to compare it with the analysis of other projects and to discuss implications for IA research and practice. The Workshop was divided into two sessions with the morning session focusing on the outputs of the EVIA project and the afternoon session on the findings from other relevant IA projects. The feedback from the workshop was discussed the following day during an internal meeting, held at the same location.

The final workshop was decided to be held at Scotland House in Brussels on 16 January 2008. The workshop was aimed towards practitioners working in the Better Regulation Units of the EU, policy makers in the field of environmental policy, policy makers with an experience in conducting IAs and academics in the relevant field. In the end the meeting was attended by 61 participants with 6 members from the Advisory Board.

This workshop was set up around the findings of the EVIA project, potentials and limits to integration of IA and the convergence of IA and European leadership. Presentations were combined with two roundtables on the "potentials and limits of integration – the role of IA" and "the potentials for a convergence of IA models in the EU". The workshop provided also valuable feed-back to the policy paper, a draft of which had already been circulated among the participants.

WP4B: Handbook and good practices

The first draft structure of the handbook was circulated among the team in May 2007. This was further elaborated during the internal team meeting held 20 June in Brussels. Based on these an outline was decided upon with the responsibilities of chapters allocated to the organisations within the team.

The aim of the book is to provide a broad overview of conceptual foundations of and practical experiences with Impact Assessment (IA). It builds on a unique empirical basis of research on IA procedures and practices in all EU Member States. The book is addressed to both the academic community and to IA practitioners. It does not provide practical guidance for those directly involved in individual assessments, but a source of information and reflection for those studying, designing and implementing IA procedures.

The book starts from the observation that 'better regulation' has become a policy field in its own right, with dedicated actors and institutions. The aim of the book is to explore this emerging policy field of better regulation with a focus on Impact Assessment (IA). The book aims to give a broad overview of IA concepts, procedures and practices thereby serving as a standard reference for those interested in this field. It provides an overview of recent trends in this field and should assess in how far IA is contributing to its political objectives, particularly improving the quality of regulation, reducing regulatory burden, fostering policy integration and sustainable development. It explores which factors determine the success and quality of IA and how different jurisdictions attempt to ensure that IA receives

the necessary attention in the process of policy development. Sustainable development will be an important angle from which to evaluate IA, but the book will recognize that promoting sustainability is in practice only one amongst many objectives of IA.

Drafts of the chapters were available for participants at the final workshop 16 January 2008.

Currently, negotiations are under way with Springer to publish the book. After a review process, the concept has been accepted for publishing.

Deliverables

No.	Deliverable title	Type	Month due	Status
D4.1	Workshop 1	Workshop	16	Completed
D4.2	Good practices for IAs (draft of Handbook)	Report	20	Completed
D4.3	Workshop 2	Workshop	22	Completed
D4.4	Final Draft Handbook	Report	24	Completed

Milestones

No.	Deliverable title	Type	Status/foreseen achievement date
M4.1	Meeting of the Advisory Board	Meeting	Completed
M4.2	Draft of Handbook	Report	Completed
M4.3	Final Handbook	Report	Completed

Section 3: Consortium management

Objectives

Preparation and organisation of meetings of the project team and the Advisory Board and administrative management of the project.

Progress towards objectives

In order to achieve the project objectives, an intensive communication among the members of the team was organised by means of exchange via e-mail and collaborative workgroup server (bscw), by conference calls and as part of eight project meetings in Berlin, London, Seville and Brussels (5). These meetings were initiated to

- Coordinate and to further elaborate each step in the work plan of the project, discuss milestones as specified in the different WP

- Control the progress of work in each work package

In addition an intensive communication among the members of the team was organised by means of exchange via email and collaborative workgroup server (bscw). Between the project meetings, numerous conference calls on various topics were held with either all partners or on the WP level together with the coordinator. In total there were almost bimonthly meetings within the team. The regular meetings allowed the joint implementation of the work plan, the monitoring of progress and the integration of the results.

Section 4: Other issues

Not applicable.

Annex: Plan for using and disseminating the knowledge

Section 1 - Exploitable knowledge and its use

Not relevant as the research does not produce exploitable results that have a potential for industrial or commercial application.

Section 2 – Dissemination of knowledge

Overview table

Planned/ actual dates	Type	Type of audience	Countries addressed	Size of audience	Partner responsible /involved
Month 1	*Flyers*	*Research and Practitioners*	EU and MS		*FUB and IEEP*
Month 1 and 14	*Project web-site*	*Research and Practitioners*	EU and MS	*Up to 12.000/month*	*FUB and AVANZI*
Month 1-24	*Direct e-mailing*	*Research and Practitioners*	EU and MS	*Ca. 100*	*FUB*
Month 12-24	*Publications*	*Research and Practitioners*	EU and MS		*All*
Month 23	*Conference*	*Research and Practitioners*	EU and MS	*Ca. 100*	*All*

The EVIA project received considerably attention from the very outset within practitioners and researchers. During the two years of the EVIA project several activities have been performed to inform other researchers and officers about the EVIA project:

- The start of the EVIA project and the project design were published in a joint contribution to the SSH newsletter of the European Commission, together with the ENBR project/Andrea Renda.
- The project team set-up an email list (ia-research@majordomo.fu-berlin.de) targeted to both officers and researchers in the field of IA to share research results, announcements of events, etc. Currently, the list has 82 subscribers.
- We set-up of a web page with the basic project information (www.fu-berlin.de/ffu/evia). The webpage allows a widespread dissemination of the project results, as the web pages of the ffu have ca. 12.000 visits per month with 150.000-200.000 hits from all over the world.

- Results derived from the EVIA project were presented on several scientific conferences and workshops: The findings were presented and discussed at two workshops. In June 2007 the results from the case studies and country fiches were discussed and the key topics of the second workshop in January 2008 were the handbook together with the results from the survey. In addition the EVIA findings were presented at the ENBR kick off meeting (Jan 23, 2006 in Brussels) with ca. 100 participants; SENSOR project meeting Sep 17-21 2006 in Estonia with ca. 60 participants; 1st EPIGOV conference in Brussels Feb 15/16, 2007 with ca. 100 participants. Furthermore, the results have been used in a panel discussion on a workshop on IA practices in the Member States on Jan 15, 2007 with ca. 100 participants in Brussels.
- A number of papers have been developed out of the EVIA activities, which have been presented at different conferences, published in the paper series of the involved institutes and submitted to peer reviewed journals. The project and papers were presented at an ECPR Conference in Pisa, at University of Göttingen, Cambridge and Vienna. Further the project team prepared a policy paper covering the main findings of the EVIA project. This paper has been circulated widely and was presented at a public presentation organised by IES in Brussels.
- The EVIA Handbook will be published by Springer shortly. The aim of the book is to provide a broad overview of conceptual foundations of and practical experiences with Impact Assessment (IA). The book is addressed to both the academic community and to IA practitioners. The concept for the book has been peer-reviewed and is accepted by the publisher.
- The webpage with the IA observatory (www.avanzi.org/evia) will serve as a platform for future research on Impact Assessment. All reports and all country studies will be available from this page.
- Future disseminations are planned at workshops and conferences in Exeter, Dublin and Berlin. Together with other EU funded IA related projects the possibilities for a pooling of case study data will be explored at a meeting in Exeter.

Section 3 - Publishable results

Not relevant as the research does not produce exploitable results that have a potential for industrial or commercial application.

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