Experiences with Integrated Impact Assessment: Empirical Evidence from a Survey in Three European Member States

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Structure of the Presentation

1. Hypotheses
2. Method
3. Summary of the main results
4. Conclusions
Hypotheses

1. IAs are not always performed with sufficient quality regarding potential environmental impacts.

2. IAs are sometimes used to overemphasise costs compared to benefits of policies.

3. The overall quality of IAs is better if there are more resources available for assistance.

4. The quality of IAs improves with budget, time, staff and their training.
Hypotheses

• “Quality”: focus on aspects of sophistication of the IA; e.g.:
  – Quantification of impacts?
  – Methods used?
  – Inclusion of unintended side effects?

• “… monetary valuation is one of the most developed ways of integrating environmental, economic and social concerns.“ (IMV 2006)
Method

- Survey among officers in Germany (DE), Netherlands (NL) and United Kingdom (UK)

- Respondents answered with regard to the most recent IA they were involved


- Descriptive Analysis (mainly cross-tabulating)
Hypothesis 1: IAs are not always performed with sufficient quality regarding potential environmental impacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monetisation / Quantification</th>
<th>Qualitative Assessment</th>
<th>Not evaluated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental costs</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic costs</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Expected environmental impacts were less frequently quantified than expected economic impacts
- If environmental impacts were assessed, then unintended side effects were included in only about half of the cases
- Reasons: lack of data, lack of suitable tools
Hypothesis 2: IAs are sometimes used to overemphasise costs compared to benefits of policies.

- Mostly: costs and benefits were assessed with the same methodical efforts

- But: frequently costs and benefits were not compared by a specific method or only qualitatively (especially in Germany)

→ No overemphasising of costs, but a gap between guidelines and practice
Hypothesis 3: The overall quality of IAs is better if there are more resources available for assistance.

- Resources covered: use of IA guidance documents, support of IA co-ordination unit

- Both seem to lead to
  - more frequent quantification of impacts
  - more frequent distinction between one-off costs and recurring costs

- Observed differences (between use/no use; support/no support) are partly statistically significant
Hypothesis 3: The overall quality of IAs is better if there are more resources available for assistance.

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<tr>
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<th>Environmental costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monetisation / Quantification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of IA documents</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of IA documents</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- But: vast majority of respondents without such assistance are from Germany → a country-specific analysis would not have been feasible → no strong conclusion possible
Hypothesis 4: The quality of IAs improves with budget, time, staff and their training.

- Aspect covered: training

- Training seems to lead to
  - more frequent quantification of impacts
  - more frequent distinction between one-off costs and recurring costs
  - more frequent inclusion of unintended side effects and wider economic costs

- Observed differences (between training/no training) are partly statistically significant
Conclusions

- Many IAs suffer from a weak consideration of potential environmental impacts

- There is still much to improve in covering both positive and negative impacts of a policy proposal

- However, the degree of sophistication of conducted IAs can be improved if officers receive training or make use of IA guidance documents and receive support from IA co-ordination units
Literature
