

Practical Guide to Sustainability Assessment

Level

Intermediate

Prerequisites

Participants are expected to have an understanding of IA processes and terminology. Hence it would be beneficial if they previously have attended the IAIA training course "Understanding Impact Assessment" or similar, or otherwise have at least a year of work experience as a proponent or regulator within an IA system. A particular interest in sustainability assessment is obviously desirable.

Language of Delivery

English

Duration

1 day course

Names and Contact Details of Trainers

Jenny Pope

Director

Integral Sustainability

PO Box 79

South Fremantle, WA 6162

Australia

phone: +618 9431 7554 fax: +618 9431 7031

e-mail: jenny@integral-sustainability.net

Angus Morrison-Saunders

Senior Lecturer in Environmental Assessment

School of Environmental Science

Murdoch University

South Street

Murdoch, WA 6150

Australia

phone: +618 9360 6125 fax: +618 9360 6787

e-mail: A.Morrison-Saunders@murdoch.edu.au

Summary of the Purpose, Content and Learning Outcomes

The challenge of transitioning to a green economy is the challenge of sustainability! Sustainability assessment is a tool that informs decision-making in order to promote sustainable outcomes. It can be applied in different circumstances for different purposes by different types of decision-makers, including:

- government regulators as an approvals process for proposals (particularly project proposals), analogous to EIA;
- proponents (or consultants, planners, engineers) to inform development of a proposal, which could be a policy, plan or project;
- government regulators, non-government organisations or any other interested party to assess the sustainability of current practices (e.g. a whole industry sector).

This intermediate level course presents the theory and practice of sustainability assessment based on best practice examples from around the world. It is designed for planners, government agency personnel, proponents and consultants, and students in all fields of IA (environmental, health, socio-economic, SEA). No prior experience with sustainability assessment is assumed but good understanding of IA processes will be beneficial.

The course content includes the following topics:

- What is sustainability assessment?
- Extending EIA to establish a sustainability assessment approvals process
- Integrating sustainability assessment into decision-making
- Integration, offsets and trade-offs in sustainability assessment

Learning outcomes – Participants will develop an understanding of:

- Sustainability assessment principles, processes and issues;
- Sustainability assessment for the approval of new development proposals;
- Sustainability assessment to inform planning and decision-making within an organisation
- A generic 7-step process framework for sustainability assessment of any proposals ranging from projects to plans and policy change
- How to develop a sustainability decision-making protocol appropriate to a particular context by drawing on relevant strategies and standards.

This course will feature short lectures interspersed with small group discussions and activities. A resource guide with state of the art information on sustainability assessment will be provided.

Detailed Description of the Course

Introduction: The concept of the green economy is analogous with that of sustainable development. To transition to a green economy with respect to the practice of impact assessment requires a shift towards sustainability assessment. Sustainability assessment is a tool that informs decision-making with the aim of promoting sustainable outcomes. Sustainability assessment can be applied in different circumstances for different purposes by different types of decision-makers, including:

- government regulators as an approvals process for proposals (particularly project proposals), analogous to EIA;
- proponents (and their consultants, planners, engineers etc) to inform the development of a proposal, which could be a policy, plan, programme or a project;
- government regulators, non-government organisations or any other interested party to assess the sustainability of current practices, such as a whole industry sector.

This intermediate level course presents the theory and practice of sustainability assessment based on best practice examples from around the world. It is designed for planners, government agency personnel, proponents and consultants, and students in all fields of IA (i.e., environmental, health, socio-economic, SEA). No prior experience with sustainability assessment is assumed but a solid understanding of IA processes will be beneficial.

Target audience: This 'intermediate level' course is designed for planners, government agency personnel, proponents and consultants, and students in IA related fields. No prior experience with sustainability assessment is assumed but a solid understanding of IA processes will be beneficial to the participant. The course will have a general applicability to all fields of IA (i.e., environmental, health, socio-economic, SEA).

Learning outcomes: In this course participants will develop an understanding of:

- Sustainability assessment principles, processes and issues;
- Sustainability assessment for the approval of new development proposals;
- Sustainability assessment to inform planning and decision-making within an organisation
- A generic 7-step process framework for sustainability assessment of any proposals ranging from physical projects to plans and policy change
- How to develop a sustainability decision-making protocol appropriate to a particular context by drawing on relevant strategies and standards.

Content: The course content includes the following topics:

- What is sustainability assessment?
- Extending EIA to establish a sustainability assessment approvals process
- Integrating sustainability assessment into decision-making
- Integration, offsets and trade-offs in sustainability assessment

Format: This course will feature a number of lectures interspersed with small group discussions and activities. Participants will be provided with a resource guide with state of the art information on sustainability assessment.

Outline of Course Program: The *Practical Guide to Sustainability Assessment* course will be conducted on an interactive basis. For each topic the trainers will present a short lecture followed by open discussion. Theoretical aspects will be presented followed by practical examples from around the world. For some topics, small group discussions and activities based around case study examples will also be utilised. A summary table of the topics, their content and mode of delivery follows.

Title	Topic Content	Activities
1. Welcome and introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce presenters – organisation affiliation and background • Introduce and meet participants • Outline aims of course and program of events 	introductions, lecture
2. What is sustainability assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly review origin and evolution of the sustainability (or sustainable development) concept • Present current definition(s) of sustainability assessment in use in leading jurisdictions and how sustainability assessment has been applied in some other jurisdictions 	lecture, discussion, participant reflections on their own approach to sustainability assessment
3. Sustainability assessment case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase of recent sustainability assessment case studies to draw out issues and challenges faced 	lecture, discussion
<i>BREAK</i>	<i>MORNING COFFEE</i>	
4. Extending EIA to establish a sustainability assessment approvals process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the form of sustainability assessment derived from EIA processes (EIA-driven triple bottom line impact assessment), and the implications, strengths and weaknesses of this approach • Need for a clearly defined basis for decisions about the sustainability of a proposal (a sustainability decision-making protocol) 	lecture, discussion (small group activity - adapt an existing EIA process that participants are familiar with to accommodate sustainability considerations)
5. Developing a sustainability decision-making protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore different models of sustainability assessment that embody different conceptualisations of sustainability • Explain what a 'sustainability decision-making 	lecture, discussion

	<p>protocol' is and how it can guide decision-making and sustainability assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to 'scope' the assessment and establish appropriate objectives, targets and criteria • Understand the challenges inherent in developing the protocol 	
<i>BREAK</i>	<i>LUNCH</i>	
6. Integrating sustainability assessment into decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a 7-step process model that integrates sustainability assessment with the development of a proposal • Understand how this integrated proactive approach improves decision-making processes • Review relationship between internal and external sustainability assessment processes 	lecture, discussion, small group activity (apply the 7-step process to a decision-making process that participants are currently involved with)
7. Dealing with integration, offsets and trade-offs in sustainability assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that trade-offs are inevitable in sustainability decision-making and importance of making decisions carefully • Principles for guiding trade-offs decisions • Use of environmental offsets as a means of delivering positive environmental outcomes from (development) proposals 	lecture, discussion, small group activity (explain how to manage the trade-off process for a case study)
<i>BREAK</i>	<i>AFTERNOON TEA</i>	
8. Issues in sustainability assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the issues arising from the examples and matters addressed so far. 	lecture, discussion, participant reflections on issues relevant to their own jurisdiction
9. Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and conclusions for entire course • Useful resources for sustainability assessment 	lecture, discussion,

Training Materials Received by Participants

Participants will be provided with an Sustainability Assessment Resource Guide which will contain copies of the PowerPoint slides used in lecture presentations, the case studies to be worked on in the small group activity sessions and a list of useful publications, websites and other information sources on sustainability assessment.

Pre-conference and post-conference Communication with Participants

The presenters will be in attendance for all of IAIA10 and thereafter readily contactable by email. Specifically the presenters will be available to provide follow-up support through e-mail exchange, access to relevant websites and (immediately post-course through) participation in sustainability assessment related workshops at IAIA10.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PRESENTERS

Dr Jenny Pope

Qualifications: BEng (Chem) (First Class Honours)
 Grad. Dip. Sci. (Biotechnology)
 Post Grad. Cert. (Policy Studies)
 PhD in Sustainability and Technology Policy

Current Position: Director and Principal Consultant, Integral Sustainability

I am a chemical engineer by training and have over 20 years experience in the field of environmental and sustainability management. I commenced my career as a water and wastewater engineer for the Water Authority of Western Australia before moving to BP, where I worked as an environmental engineer at the Kwinana Refinery in Western Australia and as an environmental consultants in the Oil Technology Centre in London, providing wastewater and environmental management services to BP business units across the world. I was responsible for the development and implementation of the ISO 14001 environmental management system (EMS) at Kwinana Refinery.

Building upon my environmental management experience, I commenced post-graduate study in sustainability at Murdoch University in 2001. I undertook my PhD from 2002-2006, investigating the evolution of sustainability assessment processes in Western Australia. Since 2002 I have been extensively involved in the development and implementation of sustainability assessment processes in Western Australia, working with both the Government and the private sector in this area.

In this capacity, I have completed a broad range of consultancy projects, including facilitating and reviewing a number of projects involving multi-criteria analysis (MCA), with a focus on site selection for infrastructure. Recent clients have included the Water Corporation of Western Australia, Western Power, Gold Coast Water, Woodside Energy Limited, the City of South Perth and the Australian Green Infrastructure Council (AGIC).

I have given numerous presentations across Australia and facilitated several workshops on sustainability assessment. I have co-presented with Angus Morrison-Saunders three 2-day courses entitled *Sustainability assessment of policies, plans and projects* on behalf of Engineers Australia. I have also taught environmental management and sustainability assessment at postgraduate level at Murdoch University (*ENV521 Organisational Strategies for the Environment and STP 220/440 Sustainability for Professionals*) and presented a number of guest lectures on sustainability assessment as part of other Murdoch University courses. I have successfully delivered training courses in sustainability assessment at IAIA06, IAIA07 and IAIA09. In addition, I have published a number of articles related to sustainability assessment in the last 5 years and was guest editor of a special edition of the *Journal for Environmental Assessment, Policy and Management* on sustainability assessment in September 2006. I co-chaired the sustainability assessment stream at SEA05 in Prague, IAIA07 in Seoul and IAIA09 in Accra.

I have been a member of IAIA since 2003 and have been an active participant at IAIA03, IAIA04, SEA05, IAIA06, IAIA07, IAIA08 and IAIA09. I was Program Coordinator for IAIA08 in Perth and am currently Peer Review Coordinator for IAIA09.

Angus Morrison-Saunders

Qualifications: BSc Environmental Science (First Class Honours)
 PhD in Environmental Impact Assessment

Current Position Senior Lecturer in Environmental Assessment (Murdoch University, Australia)

I have been teaching environmental science units, including a course on IA (*ENV520 Principles of Environmental Impact Assessment* which includes a major component addressing sustainability assessment) for more than 15 years at the university level. My PhD was on the effectiveness of EIA in terms of outcomes and this has been the focus of my research. I have published numerous journal articles on EIA (several in *IAPA* in recent years) including several specifically on sustainability assessment issues. I have also published numerous journal articles on IA follow-up (several in *IAPA* in recent years) and have co-edited a book on this topic in 2004 – *Assessing Impact: Handbook of EIA and SEA Follow-up* (Earthscan, London).

In 2002, I conducted a 1 day training course for community and industry participants (entitled *Environmental Protection: New Developments and Current Practice*) in Western Australia. Each year since 2005 I have conducted a two day *Environmental Assessment for Practitioners* training course on behalf of the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority Service Unit and the Environmental Consultants Association (Inc) – the repeated invitation to run this course twice yearly is testament to its successful and effective delivery. This course includes important content relating to sustainability assessment.

I have co-presented with Jenny Pope three 2-day courses entitled *Sustainability assessment of policies, plans and projects* on behalf of Engineers Australia. Jenny and I have successfully delivered training courses in sustainability assessment at IAIA06, IAIA07 and IAIA09.

I have been a member of IAIA since 1996 and am an active participant in the organisation (e.g. Co-Editor of *IAPA* (since May 2009), Book Review Editor for *IAPA* (2005 - 2009), member of the *IAPA* Board 2004-present, co-chair of IA Follow-up workshops at several IAIA conferences and a Theme Forum presenter on IA Follow-up at IAIA'05, Guest Editor of a special issue of *IAPA* devoted to IA Follow-up published in September 2005, lead author of IA Follow-up Best Practice Principles published on the IAIA website in 2006, and Chair of the Steering Committee for IAIA08).

Previous Presentations of This Course

This course was presented as a 1 day course at IAIA06, as an optional 1 or 2 day course at IAIA07 and then as a 1 day course at IAIA09. We have determined that the 1 day structure is the most suitable format.

Outside of the IAIA offerings of this course, Jenny Pope and Angus have been involved in various other training courses, seminars, workshops and university level teaching concerning sustainability assessment. We have continued to evolve our thinking and knowledge on the subject and consequently the content of training material that will be used in the IAIA10 course. We are both experienced at coordinating workshops and chairing discussions with a diverse international audience. We work well together and have successfully collaborated on numerous training courses, co-chairing of sessions at IAIA conferences and other presentations. Thus the material that will be presented in this course at IAIA10 will be based on tried and tested sustainability assessment training material.

Formal feedback from the IAIA09 training course presented by Jenny Pope and Angus Morrison-Saunders returned very favourable results. Similarly strong feedback results were obtained from the IAIA07 offering of this course. The written feedback comments received in each case were equally favourable overall. Other training courses conducted by the presenters for IAIA (i.e. on IA follow-up) have also been highly rated by participants.

As indicated previously, we have adapted the content and sequence of training material (although the overall 'flavour' and basic structure or format remains the same) in light of the feedback we have received from previous participants and in response to evolving trends and experience gained with sustainability assessment practice in Australia and internationally.