

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

IAIA08 Session Chair's Report

Session number and name: CS6.11 Impact Assessment in the Energy Sector: The Case for Biofuels

Day: Thursday **Date:** 8 May 2008 **Time:** 16.00-17.30 **# Persons attending session:** 26

Name(s) of Session Chair(s)

Rocio Diaz-Chavez

Contributors

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Ahmed Refaat, Shakinaz El Sheltawy. * Paper distributed in authors absence.

(a) Three current issues in application of assessment processes discussed in this session

- Land use impacts
- SEA for PPPs and linking with different agendas: energy, environment, rural development and transport

(b) One or more emerging trends

- The biofuels topic is still "new" in many developing countries (and also developed countries) and there is a need to promote guidelines for EIA and SEA.
- Policy analysis needed additional to SEA as many countries do not even have a current policy on biofuels and the relationship of different policies and agendas (e.g. agriculture, environment, transport).
- EA with other considerations such as health considerations related to health and wellbeing (e.g. in Thailand).

(c) Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:

(i) dimensions of IA effectiveness (i.e. what are the characteristics of effective IA?)

- EA extended to broader integration and more multi-disciplinarity
- New methodologies and emerging considerations to relate the different considerations of biofuels (agriculture, energy, transport)
- Guidelines of EA specific to biofuels specially in developing countries where foreign investment is strong (e.g. cases in Africa and Asia)

(ii) challenges/barriers to IA effectiveness

- Lack of guidelines on this particular topic, emerging research areas regarding impacts (specially cumulative and indirect)

(iii) how these barriers might be overcome

- There is need for more scientific data, experience with EIA and available statements will help to overcome this. Written guidelines on workshops are also necessary.

(d) Comments on the Art and Science of Impact Assessment (i.e. the relative importance and interplay between science and values/politics/subjectivity in impact assessment)

This is particularly relevant to the topic of assessment of biofuels as they have so many considerations of the different areas involved and the EA extended to broader integration and more multi-disciplinarity. The emerging considerations to relate the different considerations of biofuels (agriculture, energy, transport) linked to policy makes it art and science.