

28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the International Association for Impact Assessment  
**THE ART AND SCIENCE OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**  
**IAIA08 Session Chair's Report**

**Session number and name:** CS6.1 Impact Assessment Governance I

**Day:** Thursday **Date:** 8 May 2008 **Time:** 16.00-17.30 **# Persons attending session:** 30

**Name(s) of Session Chair(s)**

Heleen Vreugdenhil

**Contributors:**

Heleen Vreugdenhil, Olubunmi Raji, Roel Nijsten, Pradeep Mishra

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

- Success factors (e.g. prioritization of tasks, stakeholder involvement)
- Effective resource use (e.g. assessing groups of sites instead of assessing individual sites)
- Support of decision making (e.g. tension bows )

**(b) One or more emerging trends**

- The process within which an IA is undertaken might be more important for its impact than the IA itself

**(c) Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:**

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

- clear prioritization of the needs in project management
- project comparisons: using transferable knowledge of IA projects
- stakeholder involvement
- transparency of decision making

**(ii) challenges/barriers to IA effectiveness**

- Dealing with complex, qualitative data in decision making
- Many similar projects with relatively insignificant impacts, familiar environments and well known mitigation standards still need individual IAs, which leads to a dissipation of resources
- Limited implementation of policies, particular in complex issues as watershed management
- Too often EIA-reports lack quality, are too late, cost a lot of money and are not supported by stakeholders

**(iii) how these barriers might be overcome**

- Compare and visualize residual impacts of policy options and as such support policy-making
- Use class environmental assessments
- Early stakeholder involvement
- Policy directions need to be contextualized to local situations and organisational space
- Set the right priorities for successful project management with the help of Maslow's hierarchy of need

**(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)**

Science can keep the overview of IA within policy processes and can thus provide useful lessons for the actual use of IA as a governance tool.