Session number and name: CS 7.1 Impact Assessment Governance II

Day: Friday   **Date:** 9 May 2008   **Time:** 8.30-10.00   **# Persons attending session:** 15

Name(s) of Session Chair(s)
Heleen Vreugdenhil

Contributors:
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(a) Three current issues in application of assessment processes discussed in this session
- Engagement of the 4X4 / off-road industries in self- or co-regulatory initiatives and move away from the 'one size fits all' approach
- Impact of governance styles on the practice of river restoration projects
- Governance through transboundary SEA

(b) One or more emerging trends
- Continuous stakeholder involvement is considered important to meet contextual conditions and as such gain effectiveness in policy making
- The emerging SEA practice that has evolved from the EIA, has started establishing important trends in the aspects of planning and governance mechanisms

(c) Issues relating to impact assessment effectiveness:

(i) dimensions of IA effectiveness (i.e. what are the characteristics of effective IA?)
   - Stakeholder involvement throughout all policy stages
   - Flexibility in IA to obey contextual conditions
   - The adaptability of SEA offers a response to the complex eco-social system demands while transpassing the legal frameworks and strict national boundaries

(ii) challenges/barriers to IA effectiveness
   - Cross-boundary issues (e.g. differences in legislation, culture)
   - Not recognizing emerging resistance and not knowing how to respond to it
   - Behaviour of individuals that does not comply with 'general agreements'

(iii) how these barriers might be overcome
   - Early stakeholder involvement
   - Co-produce self-regulatory initiatives

(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.