Developing indicators for environmental, social and economic sustainability

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Contents

- The rationale for impact assessment
- The concept of sustainability
- DPSIR: Drivers-State-Pressure-Impact-Response
- Criteria for identifying indicators
- The indicators in the SENSOR project
- Application to land use
The rationale for impact assessment

- Prediction of policy effects
  - In relation to objectives
  - Side effects
- Can that be done?
- IA vs. CBA:
  - Quantification of impact
  - Valuation
  - Transparency of decision-making
The concept of sustainability

- Brundtland (1987):
  - meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

- The Triple Bottom Line
  - Environmental, social, economic
  - Adopted in EC Guidelines for Impact Assessment

- Intergenerational sustainability:
  - What will the needs of future generations be?
  - What technology will they have to fulfil them?

- Weak & strong sustainability:
  - Substitution
  - Sustainability & welfare
Causality: the DPSIR approach

- Indicators: impact
- But sometimes not practicable: pressure or state
Criteria for identifying indicators

- Political relevance: stakeholder involvement
- Scientific validity
- Practicality: capable of being modelled
- Responsiveness to policies being assessed
- As few as possible!
Sustainability indicators (1)

- Air quality (NH$_3$)
- Water quality (N & P surpluses)
- Water quantity (abstraction rate, water balance)
- Soil erosion
- Soil sealing
- Greenhouse gas emissions (CO$_2$, CH$_4$, N$_2$O)
- Carbon sequestration & carbon stocks
Sustainability indicators (2)

- Habitats at risk from eutrophication
- Populations of farmland birds
- Area of High Nature Value farmland
- Volume of dead wood in forests
- Consumption of pesticides in agriculture
- Spatial cohesion of nature areas
- Diversity of landscapes
- Landscapes as cultural heritage
Welfare indicators

- GDP
- Employment by sector
- Administrative costs
- Exposure to toxic chemicals ($\text{NO}_x$, pesticides)
- Exposure to disasters (floods, forest fires)
- Tourism pressure
- Visual attractiveness of landscapes
- Interregional migration
Application to land use

- baseline scenarios
- state variables (spatially specific)
- policy scenarios
- Model chain
- Land use
- indicator functions
- indicator scores
Thank you