



## Editorial: experiences with developing guidelines for effective impact assessment

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## Editorial: experiences with developing guidelines for effective impact assessment

Welcome to the second issue of 2019, a special issue on 'experiences with developing guidelines for effective impact assessment'. Guidelines can play an important role in supporting effective impact assessments (IAs). In this context, guidance representing best practice is usually associated with going beyond simple legal compliance. As experience, skills and knowledge are continuously developing, guidelines need to be reviewed and updated regularly, therefore requiring a certain degree of flexibility (following e.g. Fischer and Gazzola 2006; Gunn and Noble 2009).

IA practitioners are usually conscious of limitations associated with the guidelines they use. However, for various reasons, frequently inflexible approaches to preparing and using guidelines prevail. In particular with regards to IA instruments that are legally required, an important reason is often the threat of legal challenges and fear for litigation (see Montañó and Fischer 2019). Whilst methods and procedures are key issues covered in most guidelines, there's currently an unexplored universe related to the integration of IA into the policy, plan, programme or project making process.

IA guidelines also featured in an IAIA Ireland-UK branch international symposium on leadership in Impact Assessment, organised by the Environmental Assessment and Management Research Centre at the University of Liverpool on 21 January 2019. Here, 63 participants discussed the importance of flexibility and the necessity for reviewing and updating guidelines regularly in order to be able to support leadership for transformational change.

Subsequently, you will find seven papers and a letter to the editor. These focus on various aspects and issues related to IA guidelines. In the first paper, 'towards a more effective approach towards the development and maintenance of guidelines', Montañó and Fischer report on the results of an associated research project. Next, Green, Gray, Edmonds and Parry-Williams write about the 'development of a quality assurance review framework for Health Impact Assessments' in Wales (also for potential use elsewhere). This is followed by a paper by Parsons, Everingham and Kemp in which they describe the process of developing SIA guidelines in Australia. Subsequently, Durning and Broderick explore the 'development of cumulative impact assessment guidelines for


offshore wind farms and evaluation of use in project making'. In the fifth paper, Hameed and Nadeem evaluate the 'quality of the guidelines for preparation and review of Environmental Impact Assessment reports in Pakistan'. Next, Tokarczyk-Dorociak, Szewrański, Haładaj, Szkudlarek, Chrobak and van Hoof report on a 'qualitative study of the helpfulness perceived by Polish practitioners on the Usefulness of Guidelines and Instructions for Environmental Assessment'. In the letter to the editor, Ziller suggests that 'SIA reviewers (in Australia) need different guidelines'. In the final paper, Fischer, Welsch and Jalal reflect on the 'preparation of guidelines for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Nuclear Power Programmes'.

There is one other opinion letter, which should have also appeared in this special issue, but was accidentally included in issue 2018-5, namely by Rozas-Vásquez and Gutiérrez (2018) on 'Advances and challenges in the implementation of strategic environmental assessment in Chile'.

We hope you enjoy reading this special issue!

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