

The role of impact assessment in inclusive infrastructure development and green recovery from COVID-19

Maria R. Partidario

IAIA past-President

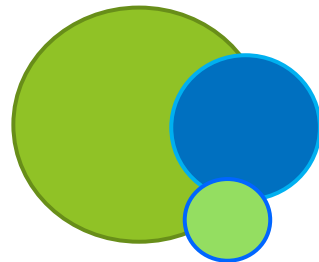
IAIA representative at UNECE ESPOO Convention and Kiev protocol meetings

International Association for Impact Assessment

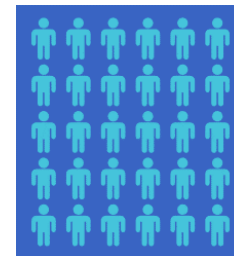


To provide the international forum for advancing innovation and communication of best practice in all forms of impact assessment so as to further the development of local, regional, and global capacity in impact assessment.

IAIA's Mission



114 Countries



5,000+ Members,
Including Affiliates

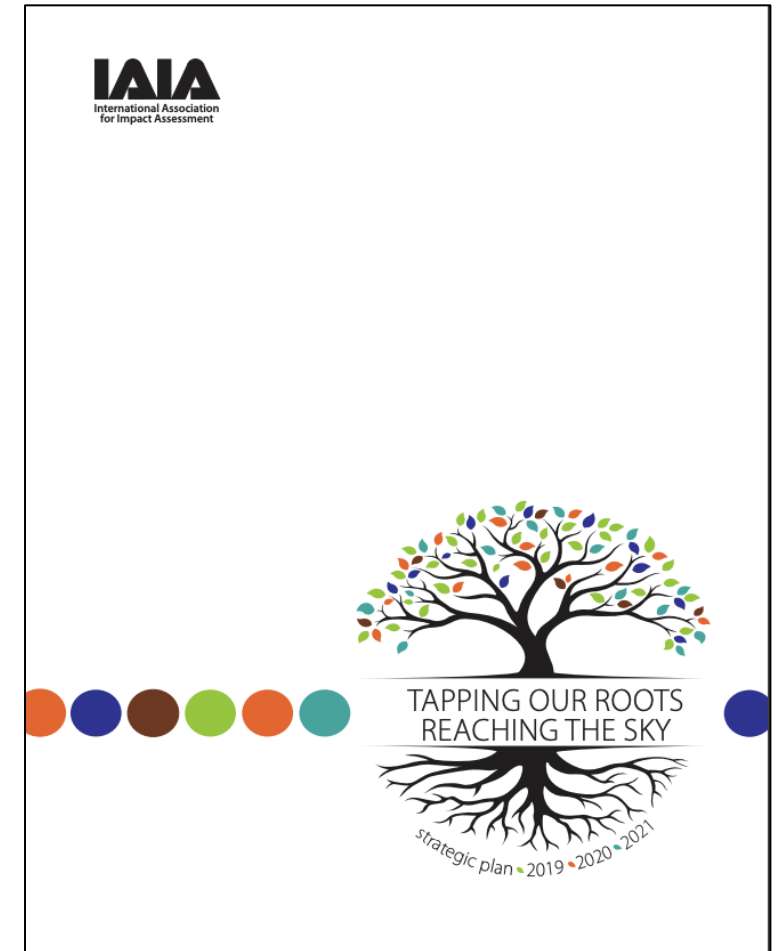
IAIA core messages

IAIA'S VISION

A just and sustainable world for people and the environment.

IAIA'S VALUES

- IAIA is committed to the promotion of sustainability
- IAIA believes the assessment of environmental, social, economic, cultural, and health implications of proposals to be a critical contribution to sound decision-making processes and to equitable and sustainable development.
- IAIA promotes the application of integrated and participatory approaches to impact assessment.
- We acknowledge that we have a duty of care to both present and future generations.



Sustainable Mega-Infrastructure and Impact Assessment

Mega-Infraestructura Sostenible y Evaluación de Impactos

HOTEL RIU PLAZA PANAMA | PANAMA CITY, PANAMA | 1-3 DECEMBER 2015

HOTEL RIU PLAZA PANAMÁ | CIUDAD DE PANAMÁ, PANAMÁ | 1 AL 3 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2015

- **Infrastructure paradox:** The developing world's infrastructure now needs replacement while the developing world needs next generation infrastructure now.
- **A business-as-usual approach to infrastructure will no longer work:** A new approach towards sustainability and human/community well being is required.
- **Climate change will continue to challenge infrastructure development:** Design and implementation must incorporate climate resilience and adaptation to ameliorate future climate change impacts.
- **Incorporating biodiversity** into infrastructure cannot continue to be overlooked: Planning to ensure the development of biodiversity elements within cities while protecting and connecting biodiversity elements outside of cities.
- **New strengthened approaches to impact assessment of infrastructure are needed:** Allowing for **rigid environmental and social controls while at the same time avoiding unnecessary delays** in approvals for much needed infrastructure services.

IAIA and SDG

- IAIA is fully committed to the promotion of sustainability, and the achievement of the SDG, through various forms of impact assessment

FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

1. The global SDG framework will **influence** national development policies, programs, and projects.
2. Many countries are translating the SDGs into **national policy frameworks**. This offers great opportunities for the IA community to actively engage in this process.
3. Applying SDG targets will help make **IA more objectives driven, rather than process- or impacts-oriented**.
4. IA will bring **increased tangibility and practical meaning to SDG frameworks**.
5. The **private sector** will find that using an SDG framework in their IAs helps them to manage their **corporate risks and obligations**, for example with respect to **human rights**.



Impact assessment can help countries attain SDGs in the strategic and project decisions they continuously make.



AUTHORS

Maria Partidário
Rob Verheem

FASTIPS

No. 19 | May 2019

Impact Assessment and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDG framework consists of 17 Goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators that balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social, and environmental. The SDGs replace and build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs are presented in the UN document "Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," which was adopted by Heads of State at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

Different from the MDGs, the SDGs are applicable to all countries, not just the low- and middle-income ones. The SDGs define sustainability in environmental, social and economic terms, expressed as protection of the planet, poverty elimination, and more prosperity, that is better distributed. The emphasis for SDG planning, action, monitoring, and evaluation shifts from the global to the national level. Individual countries that adopted the SDGs must define their own national targets, based on the global aspirational goals and targets, and monitor progress toward achieving them. In addition to the "development" focus, the SDGs also have strong "human rights" and "natural resource conservation" foci.

The Sustainable Development goals, targets, and indicators are intended to guide efforts towards sustainable development in the coming decades. Governments, the private sector, and civil society all need to make their contributions to reaching them by 2030. For impact assessment (IA) in its multiple forms—such as EIA, SIA, SEA, HIA—the opportunities to play a crucial role in achieving the SDG targets are significantly greater than they were for the MDGs. IA is already present in IA regulations and policies that many countries have enacted and is therefore ideally positioned to integrate and mainstream sustainability considerations in development planning and decision-making.

FURTHER READING

GRI, UN Global Compact and WBCSD. 2015. SDG Compass – A guide for business action on the SDGs. www.sdgcompass.org

Hacking, T. 2019. The SDGs and the sustainability assessment of private-sector projects: Theoretical conceptualisations and comparison with current practice using the case-study of the Asian Development Bank. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal* 37(1): 2-16.

Nilsson, M., Griggs, D. and Visbeck, M. 2016. Policy: Map the interactions between Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature* 534: 320-322, doi:10.1038/534320a

Nilsson, M. and Persson, A. 2017. Policy note: Lessons from environmental policy integration for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. *Environmental Science and Policy* 78:36-39

www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

IAIA and SDG

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FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO

1. Use the global SDG framework to **increase the relevance of IA as a planning foundation** for national development policy, program, and project decisions.
2. ...ensuring that **SDG targets and indicators are used** in decision- making processes.
3. Support the **adoption or adaptation of IA guidelines** to incorporate SDG, develop sector based IA guidelines aligned with the SDGs....
4. **Translate SDG targets into criteria ...**
5. **Avoid being overly rigid or overly prescriptive:** not all SDG targets are relevant for all contexts.



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IAIA and Climate Change

- The climate change formal IAIA position recognise the need for an **increasing reliance on impact assessment processes**, while major reductions in GHGs will require a **massive transformation in infrastructure and unprecedented increases in renewable energy systems**, affecting all cities and regions and their planning processes.
- **Careful assessments of climate risks, impacts, and mitigation** (both short and long-term) must be integral to high-level decision-making. These impacts will disproportionately affect fragile societies and vulnerable and indigenous peoples. IA also **addresses conditions** related to climate change that are a **direct threat to the stability of the world's financial and commercial systems** and institutions.

IAIA and Climate Change

IAIA climate change action plan includes:

- Collaboration with UNFCCC and IUCN to champion the precautionary use of IA processes as essential climate change adaptation/mitigation tools
- Liaise with institutional investors, insurance industry and risk analysts, Environmental law organizations, Journalists and media professionals, Decision-making authorities and urban planners

IAIA and COVID19 pandemic

- IAIA position sets the importance of a **clear scrutiny of investment decisions** and of policies, plans, programs, and projects, making the case for **impact assessment and for its centrality to good decision making**
- IAIA further expresses the **concern that impact assessment is being seen by governments as slowing the rebuild of economies** post-COVID. As the world begins to address global unemployment, economic uncertainty, and COVID-19 recovery, the climate change emergency remains, with profound implications for human health, socio-economic well-being, and environmental quality. Assisting decision makers in managing those implications is part of IAIA's core mission to advance best practice and innovation in impact assessment.



THINK BIG

A CLEANER, GREENER COVID-19 RECOVERY

IT IS NOT TOO LATE! REGISTER ANY TIME DURING THE SERIES TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATIONS FOR EACH SESSION AND ITS RECORDING AS WELL AS ACCESS TO THE LIVE PANEL ON 18 NOVEMBER.



VIRTUAL FORUM SERIES:

- **2 November**
The world has pivoted because of COVID-19 – Does IA need to as well?
- **4 November**
COVID-19 impacts on impact assessment
- **9 November**
Avoiding the next pandemic: Mobilizing full public and private engagement
- **12 November**
Understanding the Need for Institutional Change to Facilitate Covid-19 Recovery, Biodiversity Restoration, and Climate Action
- **16 November**
Key elements of next generation impact assessment
- **18 November**
Panel: The Road to a Cleaner, Greener COVID-19 Recovery

- Meaningful public participation
- Legal guardians for nature
- Growing approach into sustainable taxonomy (eg EU taxonomy) may change IA mindset (sustainable finances, NBS, circular economy, climate...)
- Trade-offs only acceptable if there are significant positive impacts and no net loss
- Need to modify the mind-set and the procedure

https://thinkbig.iaia.org/index.php?_zs=BgC3b&_zl=J5pq2

EU taxonomy for sustainable activities

What the EU is doing to create an EU-wide classification system for sustainable

What is the EU taxonomy?

The EU taxonomy is a classification system, establishing a list of environmentally sustainable economic activities. It could play an important role helping the EU scale up sustainable investment and implement the European green deal. The EU taxonomy would provide companies, investors and policymakers with appropriate definitions for which economic activities can be considered environmentally sustainable. In this way, it should create security for investors, protect private investors from greenwashing, help companies to become more climate-friendly, mitigate market fragmentation and help shift investments where they are most needed.

Why do we need an EU taxonomy?

In order to meet the EU's climate and energy targets for 2030 and reach the objectives of the [European green deal](#), it is vital that we direct investments towards sustainable projects and activities. The current COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need to redirect money towards sustainable projects in order to make our economies, businesses and societies – in particular health systems, more resilient against climate and environmental shocks.

To achieve this, a common language and a clear definition of what is 'sustainable' is needed. This is why the [action plan on financing sustainable growth](#) called for the creation of a common classification system for sustainable economic activities, or an "EU taxonomy".

Earth Law or Ecocentric Law



Rights of rivers

2017 Whanganui River became the first waterway in the world to get legal personhood

[Two rivers in India](#) have been declared legal entities, and [Bangladesh gave all its rivers legal rights](#).

Legal guardians for nature, such as for children or for future generations

Thank You