Experiences with science-policy interface for sustainable development in Europe

UN Expert Group Meeting on the Science-Policy Interface

Gerald Berger

ESDN Office Team at the Institute for Managing Sustainability, Vienna University of Economics and Business

New York, 5 September 2012

1) Background on the ESDN

2) General experiences with science-policy interface in Europe

3) Study on knowledge management of SD policy-makers in Europe

4) Suggestions for the Global SD Report

European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN)

Background and Activities:

✓ Informal **network of public administrators dealing with SD strategies and policies in Europe** (since 2002);

✓ **Main network for SD policy-makers** in Europe (280 members from 36 countries, incl. EU-28);

✓ **Exchange** experiences, knowledge and good practices;

✓ **Policy briefs/recommendations** on specific SD topics;

✓ **ESDN conferences** and **thematic workshops;**

✓ **ESDN homepage**: country profiles, Quarterly Reports, case studies, etc.

European Sustainable Development Network

ESDN

You are here: Home

- **Home**
- **About us and Contact**
- **Basics of SD Strategies**
- **Country Profiles**
- **ESDN Quarterly Reports**
- **ESDN Case Studies**
- **ESDN Conferences**
- **ESDN Worksho**
  other

Search www.sd-networ

Search

Welcome to the website of the ESDN

The **European Sustainable Devel**
network of public adminis
sustainable devel

...ies of the ESDN are
guided by a Steering Group
with representatives from
eight European countries. Since
early 2006, the networking
activities have been supported
by the ESDN Office. The ESDN
Office also maintains and
updates this website regularly.

For further information about the ESDN, the Steering Group, the ESDN
Office, the network members and associated partners, please visit the
section "About us" and read the 📄 ESDN Joint Understanding.

ESDN

...n new
...scribe to the
...s here. If you want to view
...wsletter before subscribing, please
...re.

What's new at the ESDN?

7th ESDN Workshop "Perspectives for European SD Policy & Governance in the context of recent EU policy strategies and Rio+20"

The 7th ESDN Workshop on "Perspectives for
European SD Policy & Governance in the context of
recent EU policy strategies and Rio+20" will take
place on 27-28 October 2011 in Berlin. It will focus
on questions such as: Which SD topics and targets
are currently included in EU policy strategies and
which governance mechanisms are applied? Which
experiences have been made with SD policy and
governance in Europe? What is the added-value and
future of national SD strategies?

→ More   [2011-09-19]

ESDN Conference 2011 – "Framing and Focussing: European Resource Policies in the Context of Sustainable Development"

- **Policy-makers**: the term, as used in Europe, refers to public administrators and politicians;

- There is **not one type of policy-makers**: their interest and use of scientific work often depends on personal capacity and preferences;

- **Political climate decisive** if scientific information is used → scientific findings need to fit the political agenda;

- **Credibility of scientific source** is also very important for policy-makers → many use reports by well-know organizations (UN, OECD, etc)

- **Different kinds of knowledge**: scientific, expert, local, etc.

- **Research in the EU is very policy driven**: European Commission has research program (FP7) → but what happens with results?

- **European SD Strategy (EU SDS)** is weak policy document & lacks

  - political support,
  - forward-looking goals (it's a "strategy by staplers"),
  - a governance mechanism, and
  - evaluation and follow-up activities.

- **Example of science-policy cooperation**: Research Agendas on 3 sustainable consumption areas in EU-funded research project CORPUS (www.scp-knowledge.eu)

Study on knowledge management of SD policy-makers in Europe

- Institute for Managing Sustainability undertook study in 2010: 25 telephone interviews (**24 national SD coordinators, 1 EU policy officer**), below some results:

- **Structured vs. unstructured interaction**: some countries (Northern & Western Europe, UK) have systematic and structured exchange betw. policy-makers and scientists, others (Central, Eastern and Southern Europe) have unstructured exchange → depends on historical developments and political culture;

- **Use of scientific knowledge by policy-makers** depends on certain criteria, e.g. language, presentation of results, implications for policy-making, etc;

- **Interactions between policy-makers and scientists** vary, but face-to-face meetings are important for direct exchange.

Recommendations for Global SD Report

1) Very clear statement: What is intended with this report? **Why should policy-maker use it? What is the added-value?**

2) **Vision for 2050** is necessary (2030 is too close for a long-term vision);

3) **Catalogue of clear objectives**, if possible quantified for meaningful follow-up;

4) **Definition of actions for the different levels** (global, national, sub-national);

5) **Clear timelines** and evaluation procedures;

6) **Political support**, ideally high-level political backing.