

Use of environmental benefits in policy decision process

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Abstract:

This presentation shows how various European countries deal with environmental benefits in policy decision process. Environmental issues are an increasing concern for the EU. This raised awareness requires improved decision-making by all levels of government and by the general community. Several EU legislations such as the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), but also national climate change mitigation measures as well as air quality improvement and other environmental measures, explicitly acknowledge the importance of environmental benefits and costs and the need to integrate them into the policy making process. In some EU legislations, e.g. MSFD, the use of environmental benefits in the implementation of the directive are required. This applies to direct benefits as well as to wider environmental benefits and co-benefits. The role of environmental benefits and costs in policy making must be reassessed as many environmental and resource management decisions become more and more prominent. There is an increased call for scientific based evidence when implementing environmental legislation. Moreover, growing competition for financial resources requires a more precise look at the different environmental co-benefits that certain environmental policies bring. In particular, larger ecological scales which are affected by policy making become much more difficult to characterise because there is often a focus on the system rather than on individual species or on specific environmental issues. There are several methods to assess environmental benefits but their application in policy making varies widely across Europe. This presentation shows how different European Member States deal with the aspect of environmental benefits in the national environmental policy, focusing especially on their main barriers and key drivers. The study assesses European countries in order to analyse the use and non-use of environmental benefits in policy decision process.

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