



Europe at Rio - the added value

Do we need another sprawling global conference on the future of the planet? As the relentless tides of UN process come over the horizon, even those most confident that Rio may be a turning point can be forgiven a little caution.

Experience in Europe however, does suggest that set-piece events can have real value even if they are only a waymark in the long process of moving forward an agenda. The timetable for agreeing the momentous EU 20-20-20 climate and energy package in 2008-09 was accelerated because of the ultimately disappointing Copenhagen conference. Big events and rather arbitrary deadlines can be crucial in catalysing changes in policy and governance in the EU, with only 27 Member States, compared with the nearly 200 expected at Rio.
(continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

Preparing the ground for a green economy
Page 2

Analysing Biomass Futures for Europe
Agri-environment payments - how are they being used?
Page 3

Green Infrastructure - Implementation and Efficiency
IEEP Publications
Page 4

Greening future EU Cohesion Policy
Economic instruments for improved waste management
Page 5

IEEP Conferences and Events
Page 6

This newsletter is published and distributed by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP). IEEP is an independent institute for the analysis and development of policies affecting the environment in Europe and beyond.

For further information about IEEP, see our [website](#) or contact any [staff member](#).

© Copyright IEEP 2011

To subscribe to this newsletter please visit www.ieep.eu/newsletter/subscribe/.
To no longer receive this newsletter, please email newsletter@ieep.eu, quoting 'Newsletterunsubscribe' in the subject field.

Editors: [Emma Watkins](#) and [Stephanie Newman](#)

Production: [Stephanie Newman](#)

One theme where a turning point certainly is required is the Green Economy. There has been an impressive build up of reports, not least from UNEP and the OECD, arguing that the time has come to pay more attention to global resource limits, to build a low carbon economy, value and husband our natural resources and plan for alternatives that create employment, as well as curbing environmental and social damage.

Some of what this might mean in Europe already is being explored: the respective Roadmaps for a Resource Efficient Europe and a low-carbon economy by 2050, alongside new thinking about natural resource accounting, innovation and greening agriculture policy. The need to curb damaging subsidies has been stated clearly and there is some, although still insufficient, acknowledgment that a green economy rests on healthy ecosystems and investment in nature as well as low carbon technologies. The challenge in Rio, as in Brussels, is to move to the implementation stage, confronting short term and competitiveness objections and addressing the concerns of those in the south, who fear that reducing our environmental footprint means locking-in an uneven pattern of development. There

are several ways in which the current downturn is the opportunity to plan for a different economic balance and invest in sustainable infrastructure.

The well received proposal from Colombia for the adoption of new universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) could be a helpful tool in this process - if they are shared in a new way between North and South. SDGs could be a frame for addressing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in the rich world in an explicit way and reduce the barriers facing governments ready to move ahead of the pack. As part of a global compact, they could lead to more specific targets and commitments of the kind needed to make progress on oceans, agriculture, mining and other frontline questions.

There are many ways in which Europe could contribute to progress in Rio but responding positively to this proposal from the South is one.

David Baldock, Executive Director IEEP

Preparing the ground for a green economy

The green economy in the context of sustainable development is one of the main issues for discussion at the upcoming Rio+20 global conference. IEEP has prepared a package of briefings to assist European Parliamentarians in drawing up their position on Rio+20. They explain the concept of a green economy, the EU's approach to it through key policy areas, preparations for Rio+20, and the historical distinctions between green economy and sustainable development. The briefings were prepared as part of the FP7 project KNOSSOS, which aims to strengthen the links between research and society/policy by highlighting relevant results from previous FP6 and FP7 projects. The briefings will soon be available to the public on the [UNEP](#)

[website](#).

IEEP is also working on a paper entitled 'Nature and its role in the Transition to the Green Economy', to be published shortly before Rio+20. The paper, commissioned by UNEP, integrates insights gained through The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) initiative with the body of work around the green economy. It promotes the acknowledgment and integration into policy of the values of ecosystems and biodiversity, most notably in green economy strategies and development cooperation, so that associated policies, instruments and investments take nature fully into account. The paper underlines the role of nature

in the transition to a green, equitable and resilient economy, highlighting nature's contribution to well-being and development. Underlining the commitments to halt the loss of natural capital to safeguard future growth and well-being, it identifies opportunities to save money by investing in nature. A toolkit of measures is presented to respond to the value of natural capital, grouped as building blocks that pave the path towards greener economies. Written primarily by IEEP staff, the paper will benefit from input and review from a wide range of relevant stakeholders and will be presented in Rio in June.

Contact: [Patrick ten Brink](#), [Doreen Fedrigo-Fazio](#) and [Leonardo Mazza](#)

Analysing Biomass Futures for Europe

Bioenergy use will be a key to meeting the targets of the EU Renewable Energy Directive. IEEP has contributed to a major project in the field of bioenergy, the Biomass Futures project, financed by the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe programme. A coalition of well-respected research institutions from across the EU, led by Imperial College and including inter alia IIASA, Alterra, Oeko-Institute and ECN, have investigated the role that bioenergy can play up to 2020 and the wider consequences of its use.

IEEP co-organised the final project workshop, hosted by Green MEP Claude Turmes in the European Parliament in March, which presented the project's results. The main outputs of the project include:

1. An EU-wide mapping of biomass energy potentials from various sources, including waste and residues from different sectors, as well as purposefully grown energy crops, to help Member States meet their renewable energy targets. This mapping revealed a significant domestic sustainable bioenergy potential, of which large shares currently remain underexploited; and
2. Ecological-economic modelling of the impacts of EU bioenergy use up to 2030. The results make a clear case for the global protection of high biodiversity and high carbon stock areas, to prevent environmentally and socially harmful indirect effects.

While the modelling suggests that there is significant potential for sustainable biomass production in the EU, a key challenge in accessing this will be to ensure that the potential remains sustainable when it passes from the realm of modelling to the localised realities of biomass production. How to achieve this should be the subject of dedicated attention from the policy and research communities at Member State and EU levels.

Reports from the project and the presentations given at the final workshop can be found on the Biomass Futures website.

Contact: [Bettina Kretschmer](#)



Agri-environment payments - how are they being used?

Photo: Vicki Dehesa

Agri-environment land management payments are the only measure that every Member State must implement within their 2007-13 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). These incentive payments are of particular interest because some of the proposals for 'greening' CAP payments, such as crop diversification and maintenance of permanent grassland, are commonly found as part of 'entry-level' agri-environment schemes, and after 2014 the new green requirements will become part of the baseline for agri-environment payments.

IEEP has just completed a study of all 88 RDPs in the EU-27 and created the first typology of entry-level agri-environment management actions and their potential contribution to EU environmental objectives. Case studies in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Poland and the UK show how these payments are used to incentivise environmental

management just above the reference level, and how schemes are targeted, designed and revised.

The study concludes that in a reformed CAP there will be two distinct roles for entry-level agri-environment schemes targeting regional environmental priorities. The first is to improve environmental management by building upon the foundation provided by the proposed Pillar 1 'greening' measures. The second is to maintain existing environmentally appropriate land management where this is threatened.

Experience of current schemes could help to inform the process of designing the 2014 agri-environment programmes in several ways, for example:

- environmentally targeted and differentiated entry-level requirements and payments could employ cost-effective new technologies such as digital

- mapping;
- farm advisory and support services have a critical role, and Farm Advisory Services could be expanded to cover agri-environment advice; agri-environment training within entry-level schemes could also be beneficial;
- involving farmers in scheme design and review processes, and providing them with feedback on environmental impacts, can improve capacity building, understanding and uptake;
- guidance to Member States on covering farmers' transaction costs may need to be revised;
- small-scale pilot testing and evaluation of entry-level schemes could improve efficiency, acceptance and delivery; and
- initiating 'fast track' internal reviews during the first two years of a scheme can be an effective way of resolving problems.

For more information contact [Clunie Keenleyside](#)



Green Infrastructure - Implementation and Efficiency

An IEEP-led consortium has completed a study for DG Environment on policy options to support the development of a 'green infrastructure' across Europe; a 'network of natural and semi-natural areas, features and green spaces in rural and urban, terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine areas, which together enhance ecosystem health and resilience, contribute to biodiversity conservation and benefit human populations through the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem services'. The overall aim of this study was to support the development of an EU-level Green Infrastructure Strategy by assessing how effective and efficient green infrastructure initiatives across the EU have been in terms of biodiversity and broader ecosystem services benefits.

The main current EU policy measures

that support green infrastructure were identified and outlined. Extensive information was collated on the variety of green infrastructure initiatives and their implementation in all EU Member States, which was used to assess the contribution that green infrastructure makes to increasing the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of ecosystem services. These benefits were then compared with costs to provide an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the initiatives. These assessments provided the basis to develop and evaluate the potential benefits of four different EU policy scenarios, ranging from a business as usual scenario (no new policy measures) to progressively more ambitious options including the integration of green infrastructure into sectoral policies and legislative measures.

The report provides evidence for the conditions that need to be fulfilled if the Green Infrastructure Strategy's potential benefits are to be realised across many sectors and at multiple levels of governance. One of the main conclusions is that much could be achieved by the full implementation of existing legislation (eg the Habitats Directive) and other initiatives. Furthermore, although a new dedicated legal instrument for green infrastructure would probably achieve the most benefits, it remains uncertain whether it would be cost-effective.

The final report, case studies and supporting Annexes are now available on the DG Environment and IEEP websites.

Contact: [Leonardo Mazza](#) and [Graham Tucker](#)

IEEP Publications

With its publications, IEEP contributes to disseminating information and insights on environmental policy and environment-related topics. Visit www.ieep.eu and browse our publications by *area of work* or search freely through our *extensive online library*.



Navigate the extensive body of EU environmental policy with the award-winning [Manual of European Environmental Policy](#), IEEP's flagship publication.

Look out for our upcoming DEEP Papers!

[Directions in European Environmental Policy](#) (DEEP) provides for critical analysis of important issues affecting the development and implementation of key strategic EU issues or specific policy areas.

These papers are written by IEEP staff and others associated with IEEP.

Greening future EU Cohesion Policy

With political negotiations on the future EU Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) gaining speed, two major publications have been released that contribute to discussions on better mainstreaming environmental and climate change objectives into future EU spending.

IEEP's report 'Walking the talk - practical options for making the 2014-2020 EU MFF deliver on climate change' thoroughly examines the Commission's draft Regulations on the future EU Cohesion Policy and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and their potential to deliver on climate objectives, particularly in relation to the Commission's ambition to spend at least 20 per cent of the future MFF on climate change related activities. The report finds that the Commission proposals introduce several positive developments and novel governance mechanisms, but also identifies a number of challenges threatening the effectiveness of the climate

mainstreaming approach.

Until now there has been no clear and coherent approach to establish the contribution of each EU funding instrument to the 20 per cent spending commitment. The preliminary estimate in this report indicates a substantial funding gap: Cohesion Policy and the CEF would deliver approximately €30 billion for climate change related activities, representing only 15 per cent of the aspirational commitment of €200 billion. The contribution of the future Cohesion Policy, bearing in mind its share of the total MFF, is particularly low.

DG REGIO has published another IEEP led evaluation on 'Cohesion Policy and Sustainable Development', which demonstrates that Cohesion Policy is currently missing important opportunities to promote environmentally sustainable economic development in European regions.

The study identifies ways of improving investment patterns and governance mechanisms to foster environmental and economic wins. It provides extensive evidence of innovative approaches to environmental integration in expenditure programmes, including 26 case studies on issues such as ex-ante conditionality, proofing tools (eg carbon neutrality), assessment tools (eg holistic use of Strategic Environmental Assessment, contributing to indicators and project selection criteria and ex-post evaluations), financial engineering and organisational set-ups. The abundance of experiences and good practices could be particularly helpful to national and regional managing authorities during the preparation of their 2014-20 Partnership Contracts, Operational Programmes and project development.

For more information please contact [Peter Hjerp](#) and [Keti Medarova-Bergstrom](#)

Economic instruments for improved waste management

DG Environment has recently published an [IEEP led study on the use of economic instruments in the waste management sector](#). The study investigated three types of instruments – disposal taxes and charges, pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) schemes and producer responsibility schemes – and attempted to link their use with waste management performance in the Member States.

Eighteen EU Member States currently apply landfill taxes to the disposal of non-hazardous municipal waste, and six apply incineration taxes. The analysis suggests that higher taxes tend to lead to lower percentages of waste being landfilled and incinerated, and higher percentages being recycled and composted.

Seventeen Member States currently employ PAYT systems for municipal

waste. Charges applied to households may be based on the volume or weight of waste generated, the frequency of collections and/or the number of sacks collected. The extent of use of PAYT varies widely: PAYT is applied to only a small proportion of the population in Spain (Catalonia only) and the UK, but there is nationwide coverage in Austria, Finland and Ireland. Evidence suggests that PAYT schemes can reduce household waste generation and increase the amount of waste sorted by households, although results are mixed.

With regards to producer responsibility schemes, the study found that there are significant differences in the Member States in the fees charged to producers, in the proportion of collection, sorting and recycling costs covered by producers, and in the results in terms of waste reduction.

Some highly successful schemes were identified, such as the Belgian Fost Plus packaging scheme and the Swedish El-Kretsen scheme for WEEE; these could provide interesting lessons for other Member States.

The report proposes options for the European Commission to consider encouraging the wider use of economic instruments. Key options include setting a minimum level of landfill tax (although not the same level for all Member States); setting criteria/producing guidance for the design of producer responsibility schemes; and encouraging the use of charging that ensures waste generators face incentives in line with the waste hierarchy (ie prioritising prevention and recycling).

For more information contact [Emma Watkins](#)

IEEP CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

In the coming months IEEP is organising and/or participating in a number of meetings and events. To find out more, do not hesitate to contact us.

Incorporating biodiversity and ecosystem service values into NBSAPs: A review of current activities and approaches – WGRI-4 Side Event, Montreal (Canada), 9 May 2012

As part of the project Lessons learnt from incorporating the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services into NBSAPs commissioned by Defra and carried out in co-ordination with the Secretariat of the CBD, IEEP, together with UNEP-WCMC, have organised a side-event to the WGRI-4 (Fourth Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 7-11 May 2012, Montreal, Canada). At this side-event, Leonardo Mazza of IEEP will deliver a presentation on Approaches which can support incorporating biodiversity and ecosystem service values into NBSAPs. Registered participant in the WGRI-4 can attend. Contact: [Leonardo Mazza](#)

Roundtable on Nature and its role in the Transition to a Green Economy – ISEE, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), 18 June 2012

The International Society for Ecological Economics will hold its 2012 Conference in Rio this June. June 18th will be a day dedicated to the TEEB during which ways for further engaging institutions, knowledge platforms, and individual experts in the practical implementation of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity will be explored. Patrick ten Brink will kick off the roundtable discussions with a presentation on the IEEP-TEEB paper Nature and its role in the Transition to the Green Economy. Attendance for ISEE members. Contact: [Patrick ten Brink](#)

Rio +20 & the 'green' in green economy: socio-economic value of natural capital – insights from and the future role of Europe - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 19 June 2012

The Nordic Council of Ministers, together with UNEP's TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) initiative organises a side event during the Rio+20 conference on the role of natural capital in green economy. The event brings together a range of international key experts and policy-makers to discuss and debate the role of natural capital (biodiversity and ecosystem services) in green economy, inspired by concrete examples and lessons learned from Europe. The aim of the event is to explore various roles natural capital can – or should - play in different countries' approaches to green economy and also discuss how the Nordic and European countries could best support a global transition to green economy. Free attendance - please joins us! Contact: [Marianne Kettunen](#)

Workshop on reforming environmentally harmful subsidies (EHS) for a resource efficient Europe - Brussels (Belgium), 26 June 2012

This event is part of an IEEP-led study for the European Commission on the phasing out of EHS. The interim results of the study will be presented and discussed at the workshop. Participants will share insights and discuss the practical recommendations being developed for Member States on reforming EHS to support the Europe 2020 strategy and the resource efficiency agenda. Attendance is by invitation only. If you are interested in the workshop or the on-going study, please contact [Sirini Withana](#).

Biodiversity proofing of the EU budget - European Commission, Brussels (Belgium), July 2012

This event is part of a study, led by IEEP for DG Environment, that is examining the opportunities for incorporating biodiversity proofing into different funding streams. This conference will present the results of the study to date and generate a discussion about the relative strengths and weaknesses of tools available. It seeks to engage a broad range of people in charge of concrete fund implementation issues, those knowledgeable of proofing approaches and biodiversity approaches as well as those representing relevant sectors that need to accommodate biodiversity proofing. Contact: [Graham Tucker](#)

Limiting biodiversity impacts from biofuels through land use mapping and certification schemes – IUCN Congress, Jeju (Korea), 6-15 September 2012

As part of a study for WWF, IEEP will run this specialist workshop. Experts will share lessons learnt from initiatives that aim to use land use mapping and certification schemes to limit direct and indirect biodiversity and ecosystem service impacts from the production of biofuels, biomass and other agricultural commodities. Attendance is by invitation only. Contact: [Graham Tucker](#)

Management of farmland in Natura 2000 sites – European Commission, Brussels (Belgium), 25 September 2012

This event is part of a study, led by the N2K Group Ltd for DG Environment, that is developing guidelines for management of farmland with Natura sites. The workshop will build on a workshop held in March and review information on the main factors affecting habitats and species in Natura sites and identify their management needs. Contact: [Graham Tucker](#)