Joy of just right EIA; How to keep the EIA practice manageable and meet society's needs



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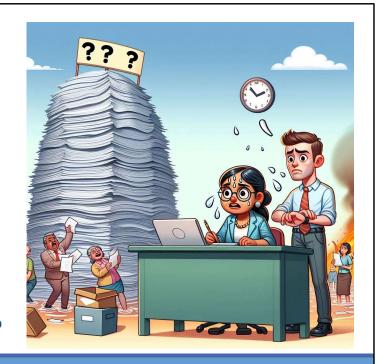


- We're in Bologna as enthusiast of EIA
- Enthusiast because we care about environment, planet and society
- But what if EIA and SEA are potential bottlenecks to solving many and urgent environmental, climate and social problems?'

# Why are EIA and SEA potential bottlenecks?

- Way of working
- Not enough skilled professionals
- Too much to do

What can we do about this?



- I would argue that EIA is potentially a bottle neck to solving environmental, climate and social problems. Why?
- 1) Way of working:
  - We're exploring fancy technology (AI), but what about basics?
  - Proportionate EIA has been a topic for long, But we still have high expectations of EIA in practice: many topic covered, much in detail, reliant mostly on proof by modeling and quantitative data
  - Result is: lengthy planning and decision making, difficult to find and grasp information, unhappy people, poor reputation EIA
- 2) There are not enough professionals (in Netherlands): number of skilled professionals declining, retirement, lack of education and specialized training
- In short: There's a lot of work to do, we have high expectations
  of EIA and too few skilled professionals → EIA bottleneck
- Question: what can we all do about this?



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#### Whitepaper on EIA and SEA in Netherlands



Some relevant findings...

- Experienced and passionate IA consultant, but also increasingly concerned
- Whitepaper drafted for NL, and abroad
- Invitation to all parties involved in NL to discuss and explore solutions to EIA as bottleneck
- Whitepaper soon to be published
- Whitepaper not main focus of this presentation, but some specific point we came across



### Education and training of professionals

- Virtually no education and training programs in NL
- EIA and SEA not well known?
- EIA and SEA bad reputation?
- Whatever the answer: need for training programs and education, and good reputation of EIA and SEA

- Topic of training and education:
- Many of the 'old guys' soon retire
- Yet very few new professionals come up
- Hardly any courses at unis, or post academic
- Supposedly due to lack of demand or interest from students. Why?
- EIA little known? Or not perceived attractive career?
- Whatever the reason: we need new skilled people and so proper training and education and a good reputation of EIA are essential

#### PROPORTIONATE EIA AND SEA

- Topic for decades and many good suggestions made
- Mostly reliant on:
  - Awareness,
  - Skills & expertise,
  - Self-discipline and
  - Cooperation
- Little progress due to 'drama of good intentions' (Friso de Zeeuw)



- Topic of proportionate EIA: has been topic for long, much has been said, many suggestions made
- Our impression: despite good suggestions, little has changed!
- Appears that suggestions rely on actively pursuing proportionate EIA by all parties (individuals) in concrete projects (reliant on awareness, skills & expertise, selfdiscipline, intention, cooperation)
- Seems as a weakness as individual contributions in practice are more likely aimed at thorough work, completeness and risk avoidance, professional reputation, information craving etc.
- In other words, pursuing proportionate EIA is almost an unnatural thing to do!
- Also; suggestions mostly show 'how to' rather dan 'will do' instructions.
- So we still end up with massive EIA's, driven by all our thoroughness, risk avoidance etc.
- Phenomenon also called 'drama of good intentions' (Friso de Zeeuw)



#### **Proportionate EIA and SEA**

- System lacks incentives or mechanisms
- More radical measures needed
- We want your brilliant ideas
- Joy in just right EIA

- Our conclusion is that EIA system lacks in-build incentive of mechanism to limit scope and depth
- In addition to 'how to' measures, we need 'will do' instructions, an incentive, a mechanism
- We need out of box ideas, suggestions... E.g. financial incentives?
- We want to go from 'drama of good intensions' to
   'Joy in just right'





## Let's continue the conversation!

Message me your questions or comments in the IAIA25 app.

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