

# IEA

## Training Manual

*A training manual on  
integrated environmental  
assessment and reporting*

### Training Module 2

*National IEA process  
design and organization*

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## List of Acronyms

CC	Collaborating Centre
DPR Korea	Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
IEA	Integrated Environmental Assessment
NCC	National Collaborating Centre
NGO	Non-Government Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP RRC.AP	United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Resource Centre for Asia-Pacific
TERI	Tata Energy Research Institute
TEI	Thailand Environment Institute
SoE	State of the Environment
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

# Overview

Reporting on environmental trends and their interactions with economic and social development is becoming mandatory for many governments and organizations around the world. Assessments and reporting can increase the accountability of decision making and help answer important questions about development and the environment, such as: *How effective is our environmental performance? How is it related to current policies? What are the policy options?* These are challenging questions that need an integrated approach based on the best scientific knowledge and technical capabilities available.<sup>1</sup>

Integrated environmental assessment (IEA) is a way of analyzing and communicating environment-society interactions.<sup>2</sup> A national IEA is complex and dynamic, and requires careful planning. This module on the design and organization of a national IEA process is based on UNEP's GEO approach to IEA. The module provides an overview of why the process is important, how it is established and governed, who would participate and in what role. It gives advice on the allocation of resources, and explains the stages involved in setting up and implementing a GEO-based IEA process. It will give you a better understanding of the role and structure of the process, and your role in participating or managing it. This module also explains how other modules in this training manual fit into the IEA process.

This module will be useful not only for national IEA managers, but also for professionals in private or public sectors who are responsible for conducting environmental assessments in an integrated and participatory manner.

The module concentrates on the following aspects of the IEA process:

- securing institutional commitment for an IEA;
- identification of stakeholders and defining their roles;
- instruments for conducting the process;
- allocation of required resources (time, human, financial); and
- interactive process design and its benefits.

A key feature of the GEO approach is the participation and interaction of different experts and stakeholders. This module explains how to identify relevant stakeholders and their roles. It shows approaches to using a participatory process, which could also enhance the capacities of the stakeholders to lead similar processes elsewhere.

Through a participatory process, IEA promotes a better use of existing capacities and information at the national level, which reduces the amount of effort allotted for the IEA and financial costs. Given its interactive process,<sup>3</sup> an IEA helps to capitalize on the experience of assessment practitioners and facilitate information exchange.

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1 Pintér, L., K. Zahedi and D. Cressman. (1998). *Capacity Building for Environmental Assessment and Reporting (IEAR)*. Winnipeg, MB: IISD for UNEP. [www.iisd.org/measure/capacity/iear.asp](http://www.iisd.org/measure/capacity/iear.asp).

2 For more details regarding GEO and the Integrated Environmental Assessment, review modules 1 and 5.

3 *Interactive process* stands for a process that stimulates the exchange of ideas, consider different points of view based on scientific and empirical evidence, that generates a value added knowledge and enrich the analysis.



## Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# Course Materials

## 1. Introduction and objectives



A successful integrated environmental assessment at the national level requires good advance planning. This starts with understanding the role, design and organization of the process, as well as identification of the main steps and activities needed to achieve the IEA's goals.

This module provides guidance on how to encourage participation of different sectors through the entire process. However, activities related to each stage of the IEA may be undertaken with relative independence, depending on what best suits the political and institutional situation in your country.

After successfully completing this module, you will have developed the capacity to conceptualize, participate in and manage the design and organization of an IEA process. You will be able to:

- understand the main stages of the IEA process;
- understand the institutional arrangements to be developed;
- learn to lead an IEA process in an interactive and participatory way;
- identify the main activities and procedures for preparing IEA reports and promoting their findings to achieve maximum impact; and
- be aware of and able to manage challenges of running the process while involving the public.

In order to achieve this competence and these capacities, the module incorporates three interactive training elements: case examples, discussion questions and exercises.

The module is organized in three main sections, of which this introduction is the first. The second section explains the main contributions of the IEA process in terms of capacity building and network development. The third section presents in detail the organization and design of the national IEA process, explaining each stage of the process from start-up and institutional framework through the final steps for reporting and follow-up.

## 2. IEA process features

IEAs are designed to generate information on the status and dynamics of the environment and its interaction with human well-being. They are typically known first and foremost for their products: reports, websites or databases. However, in order to produce such information and expect it to have both high levels of scientific credibility and policy relevance, an IEA also must have a well-planned and well-managed *process*.

The ultimate success of an IEA process depends on who is in charge of and who participates in the process, in what specific role, how the process is structured, and how it allows for flexibility to adapt to local cultural, administrative, legal and other conditions.

The design of IEA processes can learn from the experience of UNEP's global GEO program, its regional sub-assessments, and the growing number of national and sub-national IEA efforts. Based on this experience, we have identified key IEA process attributes that can help guide planning of new initiatives at the national and sub-national levels.



- **Participatory.** This means that different stakeholders are involved in an interactive process that promotes knowledge and information exchange, and makes clear their position and interests on issues. Engaging participation helps identify IEA issues that truly matter, strengthens the analysis of the observed change, and builds ownership of the IEA's findings among audiences who are supposed to follow up with action.
- **Multidisciplinary and multisectoral.** IEA is *multidisciplinary* because the analysis takes into account different branches of science in such a way that the process of discussion, construction and analysis from different disciplines enriches the assessment. It is *multi-sectoral* because environmental issues have many economic and social interlinkages, so participation of different sectors (public and private) is necessary to carry out a sound assessment as well as to ensure that results of the assessment lead to articulate responses and actions from different sectors.
- **Integrated.** In the IEA designation, integrated refers to a number of aspects of the assessment:
  - linking state of the environment analysis with policy analysis;
  - incorporating global and sub-global perspectives;
  - incorporating historical and future perspectives;
  - covering a broad spectrum of issues and policies; and
  - looking at dynamic and complex interactions between the environment and human well-being in place-based contexts (e.g., particular countries, ecosystems, cities, regions, watersheds).<sup>4</sup>
- **Multi-product.** IEAs typically generate a family of products targeting a wide audience. The products range from simple posters through fact sheets, data compendia to comprehensive IEA reports and executive summaries.
- **Institutionalized.** IEA involves assessing and reporting on the environment and its interaction with human well-being as an integral part of sustainable development. IEA needs to be built with a long-term perspective in mind where assessment is cyclical, and where periodic products and continuous interaction among participants in policy and science communities and other elements of the public are part of the process.

IEAs are instruments for *social learning* where society at various levels builds knowledge about human interactions with the environment, and the resultant risks and impacts, and in the process builds capacity to better adapt to the challenges ahead.<sup>5</sup> Along the process, the IEA contributes to a better understanding of the links between environment and development, strengthening the capabilities of participants to identify upcoming issues, to evaluate alternative options for action, to agree on common goals, to promote informed decisions by policy-makers, and to set future national environmental agendas. So, an IEA is an instrument for advancing the development of

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