

The 8th European Environmental Evaluators Network Forum (EEEN2020)
**Environmental Evaluation Supporting the Implementation of SDGs and
Transformative Policymaking**

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Sessions – Track A

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Session 1A Evaluating indicators and policies for sustainable circular economy

Session chairs: Petrus Kautto and David Lazarevic (Finnish Environment Institute)

Transformation from current linear economy towards a Circular Economy has been proposed as a key to promote environmental, economic and social sustainability and circular economy is high on the European Union's policy agenda (Ellen McArthur Foundation 2015; European Commission 2018; 2020). However, the systemic and disruptive changes required for such a transition will not take place without significant changes in existing evaluation metrics and regulatory structures. While many different policy instruments have been adopted to promote more sustainable resource use, in areas such as waste, product and chemicals policy, these are often scattered, weak and disproportionately divided along economic sectors (EEA 2019; Kautto and Lazarevic 2020). Thus, there is a great need to develop our understanding on how metrics, indicators and policies can accelerate the transformation towards circularity. This session welcomes presentations and papers evaluating metrics, indicators, programmes, policies and policy instruments aiming to promote CE as well as considerations for evaluation schemes.

Session 2A Theories and frameworks for auditing and evaluating policy coherence for sustainability transformations

Session chair: Vivi Niemenmaa (National Audit Office of Finland)

Policy coherence among environmental, economic and social policies is crucial in sustainability transformations and in achieving the 17 Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (OECD; 2019). Policy coherence can be defined as an attribute in policy making "that systematically reduces conflicts and promotes synergies between and within different policy areas to achieve the outcomes associated with jointly agreed policy objectives" (Nilsson et al., 2012). Policy coherence requires cross-sectorially integrated policy objectives, coherence in policy instruments and policy implementation which does not distort the goals of formal policies (Nilsson et al, 2012).

Achieving policy coherence for sustainable development and sustainability transitions is, nevertheless, a challenge. So far, evidence shows that no country has reached a high level of economic wellbeing in an environmentally sustainable way (O'Neil et al., 2018). The auditing and evaluation of policies and programmes can contribute to a better understanding of the current level of coherence, contradictions in policy mixes, challenges facing policy coherence and the identification of best practices. This session welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions on evaluation and auditing policy coherence within environmental and other sectorial policies.

Session 3A Methods, tools and case studies for evaluating and auditing policy coherence for sustainability transformations

Session chair: Karoliina Pilli-Sihvola (National Audit Office of Finland)

Moving towards greater policy coherence and reaching the 17 Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires the better integration of policy objectives, and improved coherence of policy instruments and policy implementation which does not distort the goals of formal policies (Nilsson et al, 2012). Evaluators and auditors can play a role by developing methods and tools which incorporate SDGs in the evaluation and auditing of policy coherence, and whether progress is achieved efficiently and effectively. Practical methods and tools are available, for instance by the OECD (2019) and the Stockholm Environment Institute. Currently, however, we lack a comprehensive understanding of available tools, their aims, and experiences and challenges from implementation in the field. This session welcomes contributions on the practical methods, tools and case studies.

Session 4A Risk Assessment as a tool for advancing sustainability in environmental evaluation

Session chair: Eeva Primmer (Finnish Environment Institute)

Risks associated with SDGs and transformative policy making may go unnoticed because of gaps and overlaps between sectors, between international and national levels and between the SDGs. Using risk assessment in environmental evaluation helps in avoiding these gaps and overlaps by making sure the risks do not go unnoticed. During this session, you will have the opportunity to hear from experts who use risk assessments to advance on sustainability in their own activities and sectors (research, business, government), followed by a discussion between the experts and participants.

Session 5A The role of national advisory bodies in policy evaluation

Session chairs: Matthias Duwe (Ecologic Institute) and Magdalena Józwicka-Olsen (EEA)

National scientific advisory bodies are often established by the climate laws to provide external expert guidance and policy evaluation. The goal of this session is to discuss the role that independent scientific advisory bodies have in carrying out or contributing to policy evaluation at the national level. The discussion will focus on climate policy as the topic area. The session will draw on insights from a mapping exercise on national climate change advisory bodies and their role in European countries. To frame a discussion, the preliminary results from an ongoing research by Ecologic Institute and IDDRI for the European Environment Agency will be presented. Further, we will hear from (ex) representatives of these bodies their experiences, the role of policy evaluation in activities of the bodies and challenges in approaching this type of activities. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss with each other and the speakers.