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Environmental policy integration in Europe: looking back, thinking ahead

The European Environment Agency is the EU's dedicated agency for gathering and disseminating information on the environment in Europe. Although the Agency is an EU body, its members is made up of 31 European countries, including six non-EU countries.

The Agency has in recent years devoted increasing attention to monitoring progress on the integration of environmental concerns into other policy sectors, focusing in particular on a number of key sectors – transport, agriculture and energy. In order to review progress in EPI more widely, and also to explore a potentially enlarged role for the EEA in this area, a one-year project on policy integration was launched in 2004. The project, which is being supported by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), is to make a contribution to the EEA's 2005 state of the environment report.

The first phase of the project involved a comprehensive state-of-the-art review of EPI at national and EU levels. The review showed a clear need for a common framework for evaluating and comparing progress across sectors and among countries. The development of such a framework has therefore become a central task for this project. The framework will be put to the test in series of papers addressing some key aspects of EPI, i.e.

- Greening the sectors: progress of EPI in the transport, agriculture and fisheries sectors
- Governance for EPI: administrative culture and practice for EPI
- Sustainability impact assessment: an effective tool for EPI?
- The potential of EU budgetary mechanisms and funding to promote environmental policy integration (EPI)

The conference paper will provide an overview of the key findings in the state of the art review, present the concept of the evaluation framework and highlight key issues that have arisen in the subsequent papers.