

Sustainable Development Methodology

Assessing the environmental, social and economic impacts of policies and actions

List of key recommendations

This document lists all of the key recommendations related to assessing sustainable development impacts of policies and actions contained in the ICAT *Sustainable Development Methodology*. Chapter 13 of the methodology lists all key recommendations related to reporting, which are not duplicated here.

Key recommendations are intended to assist users in producing credible impact assessments that pursue high quality and are based on the principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and accuracy.

The *Introduction to the ICAT Assessment Guides* provides further description on how and why key recommendations are used within the ICAT assessment guides, as well as more information about following either the “flexible approach” or the “key recommendations approach” when using the methodology.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 2: Objectives of assessing sustainable development impacts

- Determine the objectives of the assessment at the beginning of the impact assessment process

Chapter 3: Key concepts, steps and planning the assessment

- Base the assessment on the principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and accuracy

Chapter 4: Describing the policy or action

- Clearly describe the policy or action (or package of policies/actions) that is being assessed

Chapter 5: Choosing which impact categories and indicators to assess

- Include all sustainable development impact categories in the assessment that are expected to be (1) relevant (based on the objectives of the assessment, national or local policy objectives, sustainable development goals and priorities, local circumstances, and stakeholder priorities) and (2) significantly affected by the policy or action (either positively or negatively)
- Consult stakeholders when choosing which impact categories to assess

Chapter 6: Identifying specific impacts within each impact category

- Identify all potential sustainable development impacts of the policy or action within each impact category included in the assessment, using a causal chain and table format if relevant and feasible, and in consultation with stakeholders
- Separately identify and categorise in- and out-of-jurisdiction sustainable development impacts, if relevant and feasible

Chapter 7: Qualitatively assessing impacts

- Include all impact categories included in Chapter 5 and all specific impacts identified in Chapter 6 in the qualitative assessment boundary
- Define the assessment period
- Characterise each identified impact based on the likelihood that each impact will occur, the magnitude of each impact, and the nature of the change (positive or negative)
- Based on the assessment of likelihood and magnitude, determine which identified impacts are significant, in consultation with stakeholders
- Summarise the qualitative assessment results for each impact category, taking into account all significant impacts
- Separately assess the impacts of the policy or action on different groups in society where relevant

Chapter 8: Estimating the baseline

- Include all significant impacts in the quantitative assessment boundary, where feasible
- Define one or more appropriate indicators for each impact category included in the quantitative assessment boundary
- Define the assessment period
- Define a baseline scenario that represents the conditions most likely to occur in the absence of the policy or action for each indicator included in the assessment boundary
- Estimate baseline values over the assessment period for each indicator included in the assessment boundary
- Separately estimate baseline values for different groups in society where relevant

Chapter 9: Estimating impacts ex-ante

- Define a policy scenario that represents the conditions most likely to occur in the presence of the policy or action over time for each indicator being estimated, taking into account all specific impacts included in the quantitative assessment boundary
- Estimate the net impact of the policy or action on each indicator by subtracting baseline values from policy scenario values, taking into account all specific impacts included in the quantitative assessment boundary
- Separately assess the impacts of the policy or action on different groups in society where relevant

Chapter 10: Estimating impacts ex-post

- Recalculate baseline values (as described in Chapter 8) every time an ex-post assessment is undertaken
- Estimate the net impact of the policy or action on each indicator in the quantitative assessment boundary by subtracting baseline values from policy scenario values, taking into account all specific impacts included in the quantitative assessment boundary
- Separately assess the impacts of the policy or action on different groups in society where relevant
- For users following the comparison group method: identify an equivalent comparison group for each impact category in the assessment boundary and collect data from the comparison group and the policy group over the assessment period for each indicator included in the assessment boundary

Chapter 11: Assessing uncertainty

- Assess the uncertainty of the assessment results, either qualitatively or quantitatively
- For quantitative assessments: Conduct a sensitivity analysis for key parameters and assumptions in the assessment

Chapter 12: Monitoring performance over time

- Define indicators that will be used to track performance of the policy or action over time for each impact category included in the assessment
- If estimating impacts ex-post: Collect parameters needed for ex-post assessment
- Create a plan for monitoring indicators
- Monitor each of the indicators over time, in accordance with the monitoring plan
- Separately monitor indicators for different groups in society where relevant

Chapter 13: Reporting

- Report information about the assessment process and the sustainable development impacts resulting from the policy (including the information listed in Section 13.1)