



Regional Environmental Integration: Changing Perceptions and Practice in Objective 2 Programmes

IQ-Net Thematic Paper 2(3)

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***IQ-Net
Improving the Quality of Structural Fund
Programming through Exchange of
Experience***

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ISBN 1-871130-35-2 June 1997

Preface

IQ-NET: Networking to improve the quality of Objective 2 programmes

Launched in early 1996 and managed by the *European Policies Research Centre* (EPRC) at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, the network *IQ-NET* facilitates exchange of experience in the development, implementation and evaluation of Objective 2 programmes. Funded by a consortium of 13 Objective 2 areas and the European Commission (DG XVI), the network meets twice a year to examine issues of practical relevance to programme-makers and share examples of good, innovative and distinctive practice from across the EU. The first two meetings were held in Glasgow, in association with Strathclyde European Partnership (February 1996), and in Cardiff, hosted by the Welsh Office and Welsh Development Agency (September 1996). The third and most recent meeting was held in April 1997 in Gelsenkirchen, Nordrhein Westfalen. Meetings provide the opportunity to discuss the results of a structured programme of applied research and debate, steered by the network's partner regions:

- Steiermark and Niederösterreich, Austria
- Nordjylland, Denmark
- Päijät-Häme and South Karelia, Finland
- Aquitaine and Rhône Alpes, France
- Nordrhein Westfalen and Saarland, Germany
- Ångermanlandskusten and Fyrstad, Sweden
- Industrial South Wales and Western Scotland, UK

IQ-NET Thematic Papers

This document contains the second series of thematic papers produced by EPRC in spring 1997 as part of *IQ-NET*'s applied research programme:

- Series 2, No 1: Interim Evaluation.
- Series 2, No 2: Synergy between the Structural Funds
- Series 2, No 3: Environmental integration in Objective 2 programmes
- Series 2, No 4: The Objective 2 Programme of Nordrhein Westfalen

It supplements the following *IQ-NET* papers produced in 1996:

- Series 1, No 1: Managing the Structural Funds.
- Series 1, No 2: RTD/Innovation policies in Objective 2 programmes.
- Series 1, No 3: Generating Good Projects.
- Series 1, No 4: Monitoring and Evaluation.

Focusing on topics selected by the network's partner regions, each paper places issues in their international context, raises questions for debate and highlights distinctive and innovative practices. For the convenience of readers, executive summaries are included in French, German and English.

Papers are first drafted on the basis of field research (encompassing interviews with Objective 2 programme managers and partners at regional, Member State and Commission levels) and substantial desk research. They are then modified to reflect the discussions of the *IQ-NET* meeting and the comments of network sponsors. The papers are distributed to a wide group of people nominated by the sponsors. The EPRC welcomes comment and feedback on them.

Readers are reminded that the content of the papers does not necessarily represent the official position of either the partner regions or the Commission, and that errors of fact or interpretation are the responsibility of the authors alone.

Acknowledgements

The research team for Series 2 of the *IQ-NET Thematic Papers* comprised:

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Thanks is due to all those - too numerous to mention - who were interviewed by the above as part of the research process, and without whose input, the current research would not have been possible. The contribution of the European Commission, which co-finances the network is also gratefully acknowledged.

Translations were carried out by Ingrid Schumacher (German) and Lexus in Glasgow (French).

Further Information

Additional copies of the papers and further information on *IQ-NET* can be obtained from John Bachtler and Sandra Taylor, managers of the network, at the EPRC. The December 1996 and June 1997 editions of '*IQ-NET Bulletin*', a newsletter co-financed by DG XVI and available from EPRC, contain synopses of the papers.

Regional Environmental Integration: Changing Perceptions and Practice in Objective 2 Programmes

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Executive Summaries

*Regional Environmental Integration: Changing
Perceptions and Practice in Objective 2 Programmes*

*Integration Regionale de la Protection de
l'Environnement: Perceptions et Pratiques Changeantes
dans les Programmes d'Objectif 2*

*Regionale Integration der Umwelt: Änderungen in
Auffassung und Praxis in Ziel 2 Programmen*

1. REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION: CHANGING PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICE IN OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMMES

1.1 Introduction

In the context of EU regional policy, environmental issues are increasing in significance, most noticeably in the implementation of the Structural Funds which is perceived as an area of clear interface between economic development and the environment. The paper focuses on experiences in integrating environmental strategies into Objective Two programmes. It briefly reviews the changing relationship between economic development and the environment and outlines the experience of the regions in the management, implementation and monitoring of environmental integration. The paper also includes a summary of key issues for discussion.

The integration of economic development and environmental protection is a concept widely acknowledged at both institutional and academic levels. The first international call for parallel economic and environmental development was arguably that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)¹ in 1987, where emphasis was given to the inclusion of an environmental dimension in the work of policy makers. This idea was taken on board again at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and also received attention from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which acknowledges integration of economic and environmental decision making as a key challenge².

Academic analysis, applying the same international and institutional perceptions of integrated economic and environmental development, has cultivated a theory called 'ecological modernisation'. This represents a shift away from the traditional environmental ideology, where lasting environmental protection can only be attained by reducing or halting economic development, to one in which the provision of a framework for sustainable development constitutes a precondition for growth³.

1.2 Ecological Modernisation

Theories of ecological modernisation are still maturing, but four themes consistently emerge: environmental policy goals should be integrated onto other policy areas of government to achieve greater effectiveness; policy-makers can benefit from synergy between environmental protection and economic development; alternative and innovative policy measures should be explored, such as placing an economic value on nature as well as labour and capital, or realigning fiscal structures; and lastly, the invention and diffusion

¹ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) *Integrating Environment and Economy: Progress in the 1990s* OECD, Paris

³ Weale A (1993) Ecological Modernisation and the Integration of European Environmental Policy, in J Liefferink, P Lowe & A Mol (eds.) *European Integration and Environmental Policy* John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

of new clean or cleaner technologies should be essential components in facilitating improved environmental and economic performance⁴.

Historically, options in economic development implied a choice between industrial development and environmental protection. Environmental loss was the *passive* choice, which for example resulted in pollution, emissions, habitat destruction or the reactive choice of environmental protection. The other was environmental protection, a *reactive* choice involving the use of regulations, legislation and physical planning instruments. Emerging scenarios are now extending the continuum to incorporate scope for a *proactive* response in the form of 'environmental gain', which allows for positive and deliberate action in which individual economic programmes protect the environment and enhance environmental conditions.

1.3 Regional Practice

In response to increasing pressure for Objective 2 regions to adopt a more positive and proactive approach towards environmental gain in regional development programmes, there is growing awareness and understanding of environmental issues among programme managers and partnerships. This paper considers three primary challenges for regions: integrating the environment into programmes; establishing effective structures for environmental management; and achieving environmental implementation.

1.3.1 Integrating Environmental Factors

In a 'cultural shift', there has been a new acknowledgement in Objective 2 programmes of the link between environmental issues and industrial development. The accompanying table (Table 3.1) provides an overview of how the Objective 2 areas in this research addressed the issue of environmental integration in their strategy documents.

Overall, treatment of the theme is becoming more sophisticated, as in the West of Scotland, where the environmental focus has broadened from obvious physical measures to more complex policies including energy and resource management. How the environment is treated in SPDs, however, depends to some extent on existing regulatory frameworks: the environmental content of Austrian, Danish and German SPDs is minimal as they are implemented in the context of strong national environmental regulations.

The *Land* Environment Ministry was influential in Nordrhein Westfalen in determining how the environment would be addressed in the SPD. In South Wales, the Welsh Environment Agency was instrumental. It used a strategic environmental assessment technique to review the SPD, which indicated that the programme could produce both beneficial and detrimental impacts.

1.3.2 Environmental Management

A key challenge in securing environmental gain is to create management structures enabling this. In practice, systems are generally based on existing

⁴ Gouldson A and Murphy J (1986) Ecological Modernisation and the European Union *Geoforum* Vol. 27 part 1

structures, national regulatory systems or administrative schemes. Three different models exist:

- systems reflecting the *existing order*, and where there are predictable interactions. This is evident in Nordic areas such as Frystad, and in Nordjylland where all projects with possible environmental impacts are sent to the (county) Department of the Environment. Elsewhere, the Nordrhein Westfalen and Saarland Objective 2 programmes fit into the existing *Land* policy.
- *specialist complementary systems* which steer economic development towards environmentally-advanced practices. The Oberösterreich and Steiermark SPDs are administered by programme managers, then funds are distributed through funding agencies and departments using existing schemes. These departments then carry out the programme's environmental management.
- *innovative initiatives* such as in Aquitaine, which has encouraged previously environmentally passive agencies to change their perceptions and to allow a wider range of activities to be undertaken. The actions funded have raised the environmental profile of the region and created an improved image for investors.

1.3.3 Implementation

The integration and management of environmental practices in Objective 2 regions has not been carried out well at the implementation stage. In an approach typical of many Objective 2 areas, Nordjylland's response to environmental threats has been passive or barely reactive, rather than the advocated proactive response.

France has a standard national approach to carrying out environmental impact assessments so these are not discussed in programmes. Where these assessments are not required, projects tend only to have to demonstrate that they are in compliance with the rules on environmental standards: requiring applicants to accommodate the environment in a more holistic way is beyond the remit of relevant organisations.

In Austria, there are no centrally defined environmental project selection criteria. Fyrstad has such criteria, but their weighting is unclear. In comparison, the Ångermanlandskusten region does not explicitly use environmental goals in project selection, but it has nonetheless approved an environmental project worth highlighting - the Kretsloppspark Centrum - comprising a centre for recycling technologies expected to contain a range of integrated companies. The West of Scotland has recently incorporated criteria for environmental management into its project scoring systems, the results of which affect project selection.

A further feature of implementation is the monitoring systems in place. Environmental monitoring is still at an early stage of development. It is still very general in Austria, and *Land* governments do not have sufficient resources to carry it out in more detail. In Aquitaine, a simplified system is being developed for the post-implementation assessment of impacts. In Finland, no specific environmental monitoring arrangements have been made,

in part due to data collection difficulties. However, the Lahti Environmental Forum project has managed to produce environmental indicators for monitoring.

Three observations regarding revised approaches to future programme management are worth noting: first, there is a clear momentum gathering to strengthen the environmental features of SPDs; second, the option of creating a separate environmental priority within new programmes is generally not favoured; and third, environmental improvement may be promoted as effectively assisting competitive advantage.

1.4 Key Issues

Having reviewed the new significance of environmental issues for regional economic development, identifying environmental gain as a means of conceptualising environmental improvements as a positive force in regional economic development, the paper concludes by raising a number of key issues:

- increasing importance has been placed on integrating environmental factors into economic development strategies at European level. A direct and productive link between economic development and the environment has been identified and is apparent in various European Commission environmental policy programmes;
- there has been a move towards environmental gain. A proactive approach towards the environment is being promoted through new Commission guidelines and a refocusing of partnerships' priorities on environmental issues;
- the pace at which environmental gain is being adopted varies across Objective 2 areas, but all partnerships appear to be incrementally adopting this approach;
- the integration of the environment as a horizontal measure has both advantages and disadvantages. Environmental factors are being integrated into all areas of programme implementation, but because of the breadth of this approach some environmental measures may not be actualised and some economic opportunities may be lost;
- both the direct and indirect focus on the environment is increasing; and
- there is a need for regular and structured exchange of information between partnerships, which could accelerate the improvement in environmental conditions on a European scale and stimulate faster regional economic growth.

Table 1.1: Overview of the Environmental Content of SPDs

<i>State of the environment</i>	Most SPDs include a general profile of the environmental situation in the region. However, with the exception of four regions (Aquitaine, West of Scotland, Saarland and Nordrhein Westfalen) the profile does not incorporate comprehensive data, graphs maps or illustrations.
<i>Environmental expenditure</i>	In most SPDs, expenditure on environmental actions could not be disaggregated. Information which was available on allocations showed that these varied both within and between countries, ranging from 33% in Aquitaine and 28.7% in Nordrhein Westfalen to less than 4% in Fyrstad.
<i>Environmental impact assessment</i>	Practice varies. Most SPDs mention the requirement for environmental impact assessments but do not specify the framework to be used. Some SPDs specify the quantification of environmental impact as part of the selection criteria for projects (eg Lower Austria, Ångermanlandskusten, West of Scotland, Rhône Alpes and, where relevant, Industrial South Wales).
<i>Environmental gain</i>	Most areas had positive environmental targets and expectations for their programmes. Environmental indicators are mentioned in some SPDs but are not as broadly utilised as a basis for monitoring and evaluation. All but two regions (Ångermanlandskusten and Fyrstad) mentioned the monitoring procedures which are being applied. Generally, there is a mixture of monitoring procedures ranging from those carried out by national authorities (eg. Rhône Alpes and North Jutland) to those undertaken at regional level by local authorities and environment agencies. In the UK regions SPDs specify that interim evaluation is part of the ongoing monitoring process.
<i>Consultation</i>	Most regions consulted a range of experts and agencies on environment aspects of their programme. In Germany, Denmark, France and Austria, the formalised consultation procedure included relevant national and regional authorities. In Finland and Sweden, competence is delegated to regional level. In the UK regions, consultation has been less formalised because of the number of agencies involved in the partnerships; this will change as the Environment Agency, which has regional offices, is set to become more involved at the management and implementation stages.
<i>EU environmental rules</i>	Most SPDs have a general statement of compliance with European Union rules. Some cite further rules relevant to specific aspects of the programme including Tourism, Urban Renewal, Water, Air and Waste standards. In the German, Austrian, Danish, Finnish and UK areas some national legislation is cited. The West of Scotland SPD specifically mentions the EC's 5 th Environmental Action Programme.
<i>Relative strengths & weaknesses</i>	All the areas under study thoroughly integrated environmental concerns into their SPDs. In some cases, this is more apparent than real - regions have become familiar with the issues but this does not necessarily translate into projects. Clearly, a mark of progress with regard to sustainability is that regions have a more complex view of the projects which are environmentally feasible. A common weakness among the SPDs is the lack of comprehensive environmental data. Many also have weak indicators, and information about monitoring systems is poor.

2. INTEGRATION REGIONALE DE LA PROTECTION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT: PERCEPTIONS ET PRATIQUES CHANGEANTES DANS LES PROGRAMMES D'OBJECTIF 2

2.1 Introduction

Les questions de protection de l'environnement prennent une importance croissante dans le contexte de la politique régionale de l'Union Européenne. Ce phénomène est particulièrement évident dans la mise en œuvre des Fonds Structurels, qui est perçue comme étant un domaine d'interface manifeste entre le développement économique et l'environnement. Cet exposé porte sur les expériences d'intégration des stratégies de protection de l'environnement dans les programmes d'Objectif 2. Il examine brièvement la relation changeante entre le développement économique et l'environnement et décrit les expériences des régions dans la gestion, la mise en œuvre et le suivi de l'intégration de la protection de l'environnement. Cet exposé fournit aussi un résumé des points clé de discussion.

L'intégration du développement économique et de la protection de l'environnement est un concept largement reconnu tant au niveau institutionnel qu'au niveau universitaire. Le premier appel international à un développement économique et écologique en parallèle a probablement été lancé par la World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)⁵ en 1987, qui mettait alors l'accent sur l'inclusion d'une dimension de protection de l'environnement dans les travaux des législateurs. Cette idée a été reprise lors de la Conférence des Nations Unies sur l'Environnement et le Développement (UNCED) à Rio de Janeiro en 1992 et a aussi attiré l'attention de l'Organisation pour la Coopération et le Développement Economiques (OCDE), qui reconnaît que l'intégration de la prise de décision en matière d'économie et d'environnement représente un défi clé⁶.

L'analyse universitaire, en appliquant les mêmes perceptions internationales et institutionnelles de développement économique et écologique intégré, a élaboré une théorie dite de "modernisation écologique". Celle-ci représente un changement d'orientation par rapport à l'idéologie écologique traditionnelle, selon laquelle une protection écologique durable devait passer par une réduction ou un arrêt du développement économique, au profit d'une idéologie selon laquelle la fourniture d'un cadre de développement durable constitue une condition sine qua non de croissance⁷.

2.2 Modernisation écologique

Les théories de modernisation écologique continuent de mûrir, mais quatre thèmes se dégagent toujours: les objectifs politiques en matière

⁵ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

⁶ Organisation pour la Coopération et le Développement Economiques (1996) *Integrating Environment and Economy: Progress in the 1990s* OCDE, Paris

⁷ Weale A (1993) Ecological Modernisation and the Integration of European Environmental Policy, dans J Liefferink, P Lowe & A Mol (eds.) *European Integration and Environmental Policy* John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

d'environnement doivent être intégrés dans les autres domaines politiques pour une efficacité accrue; les législateurs peuvent profiter d'une synergie entre la protection de l'environnement et le développement économique; les mesures politiques alternatives et innovantes doivent être explorées, comme par exemple celles consistant à reconnaître une valeur économique à la nature, au même titre que le travail ou le capital, ou celles consistant à réaligner les structures fiscales; et enfin l'invention et la diffusion de nouvelles technologies propres ou plus propres devraient être des composantes essentielles de la promotion d'une meilleure performance écologique et économique⁸.

Historiquement, les options de développement économique offraient un choix entre le développement industriel et la protection de l'environnement. Des dommages à l'environnement représentait le choix *passif*, entraînant par exemple la pollution, les émissions, la destruction de l'habitat ou la réaction de protection de l'environnement. L'autre choix était la protection de l'environnement, un choix *réactif* mettant en jeu réglementations, législation et instruments de planification. Les scénarios qui se dégagent prolongent maintenant le continuum pour offrir la possibilité d'une réponse *proactive* sous forme d'"avantage écologique" permettant une action positive et délibérée dans laquelle chaque programme économique protège l'environnement et améliore les conditions du milieu.

2.3 Pratiques au niveau régional

En réponse aux pressions croissantes auxquelles sont confrontées les régions d'Objectif 2 qui doivent adopter une approche plus positive et proactive tendant à l'avantage écologique dans les programmes de développement régional, une prise de conscience et une compréhension croissantes des problèmes écologiques se font jour parmi les responsables de programmes et dans les partenariats. Cet exposé considère trois défis principaux pour les régions: l'intégration de la protection de l'environnement dans les programmes, la mise en place de structures efficaces pour la gestion de l'environnement, et la mise en vigueur de la protection de l'environnement.

2.3.1 Intégration des facteurs de protection de l'environnement

Une "évolution culturelle" a donné lieu à une nouvelle prise en compte dans les programmes d'Objectif 2 du lien entre les questions de protection de l'environnement et le développement industriel. Le tableau 3.1 récapitule les façons selon lesquelles les régions d'Objectif 2, qui sont l'objet de cette étude, ont tenté d'intégrer la protection de l'environnement dans leur documents de stratégie.

Globalement, ce thème est traité d'une façon de plus en plus sophistiquée. Dans l'ouest de l'Ecosse, l'objectif écologique dépasse les mesures physiques évidentes pour inclure des politiques plus complexes, y compris la gestion de l'énergie et des ressources. La manière dont l'environnement est traité dans les DOCUP dépend cependant dans une certaine mesure du cadre réglementaire existant dans les pays membres. Le contenu écologique des DOCUP

⁸ Gouldson A & Murphy J (1986) Ecological Modernisation and the European Union *Geoforum* Vol.27 part 1

autrichiens, danois et allemands est minime, car ils sont mis en œuvre dans le contexte de fortes réglementations nationales.

Le rôle du Ministère de l'environnement du *Land* de Rhénanie du Nord-Westphalie fût déterminant s'agissant de définir la façon dont le DOCUP aborderait la question de l'environnement. Dans le sud du pays de Galles, l'agence galloise pour l'environnement (Welsh Environment Agency) a joué un rôle essentiel, mettant en œuvre une technique d'évaluation écologique stratégique pour examiner le DOCUP. Ceci démontra que le programme était susceptible d'avoir des impacts positifs et négatifs.

2.3.2 *Gestion de l'environnement*

Un défi clé lorsqu'il s'agit d'assurer un avantage écologique consiste à créer des structures de gestion qui le permettent. Dans la pratique, les systèmes reposent généralement sur des structures existantes, des systèmes réglementaires ou des dispositifs administratifs nationaux. Il existe trois modèles différents:

- les systèmes reflétant un *ordre existant*, et où existent des interactions prévisibles. Ceci est manifeste dans les régions nordiques comme Frystad et dans le Nordjylland où tous les projets susceptibles d'avoir des impacts sur l'environnement sont soumis au Ministère de l'environnement (au niveau du comté). Ailleurs les programmes d'Objectif 2 de la Rhénanie du Nord-Westphalie et de la Sarre s'intègrent dans la politique existante du *Land*.
- *les systèmes complémentaires spécialisés* qui orientent le développement économique vers des pratiques écologiquement sophistiquées. Les DOCUP de la Haute-Autriche et de la Styrie sont administrés par les responsables de programme, puis les fonds sont distribués par le biais d'agences et de services de financement en utilisant les dispositifs existants. Ces services assurent alors la gestion du programme sur le plan de la protection de l'environnement.
- *les initiatives innovantes*, comme en Aquitaine, où des agences naguère passives en matière d'environnement ont été incitées à changer leurs perceptions et à permettre la mise en œuvre d'une plus grande diversité d'activités. Les actions financées ont accru le prestige de la région sur le plan de la protection de l'environnement et ont créé une meilleure image pour les investisseurs.

2.3.3 *Mise en œuvre*

L'intégration et la gestion des pratiques de protection de l'environnement dans les régions d'Objectif 2 n'ont pas été bien assurées au stade de la mise en œuvre. Dans une approche typique de nombreuses régions d'Objectif 2, la réponse du Nordjylland face aux menaces écologiques a plutôt été passive ou à peine réactive que proactive comme recommandée.

La France adopte une démarche nationale standard en ce qui concerne les évaluations d'impact écologique et celles-ci ne sont donc pas évoquées dans les programmes. Lorsque ces évaluations ne sont pas requises, les projets n'ont en général qu'à démontrer qu'ils respectent les règlements applicables aux normes écologiques; exiger des candidats qu'ils tiennent compte de

l'environnement de façon plus holistique ne relève pas des compétences des organisations concernées.

L'Autriche n'a pas de critères de sélection de projets écologiques définis au niveau central. Le Frystad dispose de tels critères, mais leur pondération n'est pas claire. Par comparaison, la région d'Ångermanlandskusten n'utilise pas explicitement de buts écologiques dans la sélection de projets, mais a néanmoins approuvé un projet écologique intéressant à signaler. Il s'agit du Kretsloppspark Centrum, qui comprend un centre pour les technologies du recyclage devant intégrer diverses sociétés. L'ouest de l'Ecosse a récemment incorporé des critères pour la gestion de l'environnement dans son système de notation des projets, et les résultats influencent la sélection des projets.

Une autre caractéristique de la mise en œuvre réside dans les systèmes de suivi instaurés. Le suivi au niveau de la protection de l'environnement en est encore à un stade précoce de développement. Il est encore très général en Autriche, et les gouvernements au niveau des *Länder* ne disposent pas de ressources suffisantes pour l'approfondir davantage. En Aquitaine, un système simplifié d'évaluation des impacts après la mise en œuvre est en cours de développement. En Finlande, aucune disposition spécifique de suivi n'a été prise relativement à la protection de l'environnement, en partie à cause des difficultés de collecte de données. Cependant le projet Lahti Environmental Forum a réussi à produire des indicateurs écologiques permettant un suivi.

Il faut noter trois observations concernant les démarches qui ont été modifiées en vue de la gestion future des programmes: premièrement on assiste à une prise d'impulsion manifeste dans le sens d'un renforcement des caractéristiques écologiques des DOCUP; deuxièmement, l'option consistant à créer une priorité écologique distincte au sein de nouveaux programmes n'est généralement pas accueillie favorablement; et troisièmement, une amélioration de la protection de l'environnement peut être encouragée comme favorisant l'avantage concurrentiel.

2.4 Questions clé

Ayant examiné l'importance que revêtent maintenant les questions écologiques dans le contexte du développement économique régional, et ayant identifié l'avantage écologique comme moyen permettant de conceptualiser les améliorations écologiques en tant que force positive dans le développement économique régional, il est possible de conclure en soulevant plusieurs questions clé.

- Une importance croissante est accordée à l'intégration des facteurs écologiques dans les stratégies de développement économique au niveau européen. Un lien direct et productif entre le développement économique et l'environnement a été identifié et apparaît dans divers programmes de politique écologique de la Commission européenne;
- On assiste à un mouvement vers l'avantage écologique. Une démarche proactive s'agissant de l'environnement est encouragée par le biais de nouvelles directives de la Commission et d'un recentrage des priorités des partenariats sur les questions de protection de l'environnement;

- La rapidité avec laquelle l'avantage écologique est adopté varie entre les régions d'Objectif 2, mais tous les partenariats semblent progressivement adopter cette démarche;
- L'intégration de l'environnement en tant que mesure horizontale présente des avantages et des inconvénients. Les facteurs de protection de l'environnement sont intégrés dans tous les aspects de la mise en œuvre des programmes, mais à cause de l'étendue de cette démarche, certaines mesures de protection de l'environnement risquent de ne pas être réalisées et certaines occasions économiques risquent d'être perdues.
- L'accentuation à la fois directe et indirecte sur la protection de l'environnement augmente; et
- Un échange d'informations régulier et structuré entre les partenariats est nécessaire, ce qui pourrait accélérer l'amélioration des conditions écologiques à l'échelle européenne et stimuler une croissance économique régionale plus rapide.

Table 2.1: Vue d'ensemble du contenu écologique des DOCUP

<i>Etat de l'environnement</i>	La plupart des DOCUP offrent un profil général de la situation écologique dans leur région. Cependant, exception faite de quatre régions (Aquitaine, ouest de l'Ecosse, Sarre et Rhénanie du Nord-Westphalie), le profil ne fournit ni données complètes, ni graphique, carte ou illustration.
<i>Dépenses au titre de l'environnement</i>	Dans la plupart des DOCUP, les dépenses au titre d'actions écologiques ne pouvaient pas être dissociées. Les informations disponibles ont montré que celles-ci variaient au sein des pays et entre les pays, de 33% en Aquitaine à 28,7% en Rhénanie du Nord-Westphalie pour atteindre moins de 4% dans le Fyrstad.
<i>Evaluation de l'impact sur l'environnement</i>	La pratique varie dans ce domaine. La plupart des DOCUP font mention de la nécessité d'évaluations de l'impact sur l'environnement, mais sans spécifier le cadre à utiliser. Certains DOCUP spécifient la quantification de l'impact sur l'environnement parmi les critères de sélection des projets (Basse-Autriche, Ångermanlandskusten, l'ouest de l'Ecosse, Rhône-Alpes et le sud du pays de Galles).
<i>Avantage écologique</i>	La plupart des régions avaient des objectifs et des attentes écologiques positifs pour leurs programmes. Des indicateurs écologiques sont évoqués dans certains DOCUP mais ils ne sont pas utilisés de façon aussi large pour le suivi et l'appréciation. Toutes les régions sauf deux (Ångermanlandskusten et Fyrstad) font mention des procédures de suivi appliquées. En général, il y a diverses procédures de suivi, allant de celles effectuées par les administrations nationales (Rhône-Alpes et le Nordjylland) à celles effectuées au niveau régional par les administrations locales et les agences de protection de l'environnement. Dans les régions du Royaume-Uni, les DOCUP spécifient que l'appréciation intermédiaire s'inscrit dans le processus de suivi permanent.
<i>Consultation</i>	La plupart des régions ont consulté divers experts et agences concernant les aspects de leurs programmes liés à la protection de l'environnement. En Allemagne, France Autriche et au Danemark, la procédure formalisée de consultation faisait intervenir les administrations nationales et régionales concernées. En Finlande et en Suède, la compétence est déléguée au niveau régional. Au Royaume-Uni, la consultation a été moins formalisée à cause du nombre d'agences intervenant dans les partenariats. Ceci va changer car l'Agence pour l'Environnement, qui a des bureaux régionaux, va jouer un plus grand rôle dans la gestion et la mise en œuvre.
<i>Règles de l'Union européenne en matière d'environnement</i>	La plupart des DOCUP contiennent une déclaration générale de respect des règles de l'Union européenne. Certains citent des règles supplémentaires concernant certains aspects du programme, y compris des normes en matière de tourisme, de régénération urbaine, de l'eau, de l'air et des déchets. Dans les régions de l'Allemagne, de l'Autriche, du Danemark, de la Finlande et du Royaume-Uni, certaines législations nationales sont citées. Le DOCUP de l'ouest de l'Ecosse fait spécifiquement référence au 5 ^e Programme d'Action pour la Protection de l'Environnement de la Communauté Européenne.
<i>Forces et faiblesses relatives</i>	Toutes les régions étudiées ont bien intégré les questions d'environnement dans leurs DOCUP. Dans certains cas, ceci est plus apparent que réel; les régions sont maintenant conscientes des problèmes, mais ceci ne se concrétise pas forcément par des projets. Un signe manifeste de progrès concernant le renouvellement des ressources est que les régions ont une vision plus complexe des projets qui sont écologiquement réalisables. Une faiblesse commune des DOCUP est le manque de données écologiques complètes. Nombreux sont aussi ceux qui ont de faibles indicateurs, et les informations concernant les systèmes de suivi sont mauvaises.

3. REGIONALE INTEGRATION DER UMWELT: ÄNDERUNGEN IN AUFFASSUNG UND PRAXIS IN ZIEL 2 PROGRAMMEN

3.1 Einführung

Im Kontext der EU-Regionalpolitik nehmen Umweltfragen ständig an Bedeutung zu, vor allem bei der Umsetzung der Strukturfonds, die als eine klare Schnittstelle zwischen Wirtschaftsförderung und Umwelt gesehen wird. Die Arbeit konzentriert sich auf Erfahrungen mit integrierten Umweltstrategien in Ziel 2 Programmen. Sie prüft kurz die sich ändernde Beziehung zwischen Wirtschaftsförderung und Umwelt und umreißt die Erfahrungen der Regionen bezüglich des Management, der Umsetzung und der Begleitung von Umweltintegration. Die Arbeit gibt außerdem eine Zusammenfassung der Hauptdiskussionsthemen.

Die Integration von Wirtschaftsförderung und Umweltschutz ist ein Begriff, der allgemein auf institutioneller und akademischer Ebene anerkannt wird. Die erste internationale Forderung nach paralleler Wirtschafts- und Umweltentwicklung kam wohl durch die Weltkommission über Umwelt und Entwicklung (WCED)⁹ im Jahre 1987, wo auf die Aufnahme einer Umweltdimension in die Arbeit der Programmpolitiker hingewiesen wurde. Diese Idee wurde wiederum 1992 auf der Konferenz der Vereinten Nationen über Umwelt und Entwicklung (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro wiederaufgegriffen und erweckte auch die Aufmerksamkeit der Organisation für Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (OECD), die eine Integration wirtschaftlicher und umweltbezogener Entscheidungen als wichtige Herausforderung anerkennt¹⁰.

Durch akademische Analyse, wo dieselben internationalen und institutionellen Auffassungen einer integrierten Wirtschafts- und Umweltförderung angewendet wurden, wurde unter dem Namen 'ökologische Modernisierung' ('ecological modernisation') eine besondere Theorie entwickelt. Sie bedeutet eine Abwendung von der traditionellen Umweltideologie, wo dauerhafter Umweltschutz nur durch Reduzierung oder Aufhaltung wirtschaftlicher Entwicklung erreicht werden kann, zu einer Ideologie, in der die Bereitstellung eines Rahmens nachhaltiger Entwicklung eine Vorbedingung für Wachstum darstellt¹¹.

3.2 Ökologische Modernisierung

Die Theorien ökologischer Modernisierung sind noch etwas unausgereift, doch tauchen ständig vier Themen auf: umweltpolitische Ziele sollten in andere regierungspolitische Bereiche integriert werden, um größere Wirksamkeit zu erreichen; Programmpolitiker können von einer Synergie von Umweltschutz und Wirtschaftsförderung profitieren; alternative und

⁹ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future* Oxford University Press, Oxford

¹⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) *Integrating Environment and Economy; Progress in the 1990s* OECD, Paris

¹¹ Weale A (1993) *Ecological Modernisation and the Integration of European Environmental Policy*, in J Liefferink, P Lowe & A Mol (Herausgeber)

innovative Maßnahmen sollten erforscht werden, wie eine wirtschaftliche Bewertung der Natur ebenso wie der Arbeitskräfte und des Kapitals oder eine Neuausrichtung fiskalischer Strukturen; und letztlich sollten die Erfindung und Verteilung neuer sauberer oder noch sauberer Technologien wesentliche Komponenten für die Erleichterung verbesserter Umwelt- und Wirtschaftsleistung sein¹².

In der Vergangenheit bedeuteten Optionen in der Wirtschaftsförderung eine Wahl zwischen industrieller Entwicklung und Umweltschutz. Umweltverlust war die *passive* Wahl, die z.B. zu Umweltverschmutzung, Emissionen oder Zerstörung der Habitat. Die andere war Umweltschutz, eine *reaktive* Wahl mit der Verwendung von Vorschriften, Gesetzen und Instrumenten der Raumplanung. Die sich daraus ergebenden Szenarios dehnen das Kontinuum nun auf die Möglichkeit einer *proaktiven* Reaktion in Form eines 'Umweltgewinns' ('environmental gain') aus, der eine positive absichtliche Aktion erlaubt, bei der individuelle Wirtschaftsprogramme die Umwelt schützen und Umweltbedingungen verstärken.

3.3 Regionale Praxis

Auf wachsenden Druck hin, daß Ziel 2 Regionen eine positivere und mehr proaktive Einstellung zu Umweltgewinn in den regionalen Wirtschaftsförderungsprogrammen zeigen sollten, hat das Bewußtsein und das Verständnis für Umweltfragen bei Programmanagern und Partnerschaften zugenommen. Diese Arbeit betrachtet drei Hauptherausforderungen an die Regionen: eine Integrierung der Umwelt in die Programme; die Errichtung effektiver Strukturen für Umweltmanagement; und die Erzielung einer umweltbezogenen Umsetzung.

3.3.1 Integration von Umweltfaktoren

Durch 'kulturellen Verschiebung' kam es in Ziel 2 Programmen zu einer neuen Anerkennung der Verbindung zwischen Umweltfragen und industrieller Entwicklung. Die begleitende Tabelle (Tabelle 3.1) gibt einen Überblick darüber, wie die hier untersuchten Ziel 2 Gebiete die Frage einer Integration der Umwelt in ihren Strategiedokumenten angingen.

Insgesamt wird die Behandlung des Themas anspruchsvoller, wie im Westen Schottlands, wo sich der Umweltgedanke von offensichtlichen physischen Maßnahmen auf komplexere Politik, wie das Management von Energie und Ressourcen, ausweitet. Wie die Umwelt in den EPPD behandelt wird, hängt in gewissem Maße von bestehenden Rahmenvorschriften ab: der Umweltgehalt der österreichischen, dänischen und deutschen EPPDs ist minimal, da sie in einem Kontext starker nationaler Umweltvorschriften umgesetzt werden.

In Nordrhein-Westfalen hatte das Umweltministerium des Landes einen Einfluß auf die Entscheidung, wie die Umwelt in den EPPD angesprochen werden sollte. In Süd Wales war die Welsh Environment Agency maßgeblich. Sie verwendete eine strategische Umweltbewertungstechnik zur Prüfung des

¹² Gouldson A and Murphy J (1986) Ecological Modernisation and the European Union *Geoforum* Vol. 27 part 1

EPPD, die anzeigte, daß das Programm sowohl nützliche als auch schädliche Folgen haben könnte.

3.3.2 Umweltmanagement

Eine wichtige Herausforderung für die Erzielung eines Umweltgewinns ist die Schaffung von entsprechenden Managementstrukturen. In der Praxis basieren die Systeme im allgemeinen auf bestehenden Strukturen, nationalen Vorschriftssystemen oder Verwaltungsprogrammen. Es gibt drei verschiedene Modelle:

- Systeme, die die *bestehende Ordnung* reflektieren, und wo es voraussehbaren Interaktionen gibt. Dies zeigt sich in nordischen Gebieten wie Frystad und in Nordjylland, wo alle Projekte mit eventuellen Umweltwirkungen an die Umweltabteilung (der Region (county)) gesandt werden. Ansonsten passen die Ziel 2 Programme Nordrhein-Westfalens und des Saarlands in die bestehende Landespolitik.
- *ergänzende Spezialistensysteme*, die die Wirtschaftsförderung in Richtung einer umweltmäßig fortschrittlichen Praxis steuern. Die EPPD Oberösterreichs und der Steiermark werden durch Programmanager verwaltet, die Mittel werden dann durch Förderstellen und -abteilungen unter Verwendung bestehender Systeme verteilt. Diese Stellen führen dann das Umweltmanagement des Programms aus.
- *innovative Initiativen* wie in Aquitaine, das zuvor umweltmäßig passive Agenturen dazu anregte, ihre Einstellung zu ändern und mehr unterschiedliche Aktivitäten zuzulassen. Die finanzierten Aktionen haben das Umweltprofil der Region gehoben und ein besseres Image für Investoren geschaffen.

3.3.3 Umsetzung

Die Integration und das Management der Umweltpraxis in Ziel 2 Regionen wurde im Umsetzungsstadium nicht besonders gut gehandhabt. Mit einem für viele Ziel 2 Gebiete typischen Ansatz war Nordjyllands Reaktion auf Umweltbedrohungen passiv oder kaum reaktiv statt wie empfohlen proaktiv zu reagieren.

Frankreich hat einen nationalen Standardansatz für die Durchführung der Bewertung von Umweltwirkungen, daher werden diese in den Programmen nicht diskutiert. Wo diese Bewertungen nicht erforderlich sind, brauchen die Projekte nur zu beweisen, daß sie die Vorschriften über Umweltnormen erfüllen: von Antragstellern zu verlangen, daß sie die Umwelt in einer mehr umfassenden Art berücksichtigen, geht über den Einflußbereich der relevanten Organisationen hinaus.

In Österreich gibt es keine zentral definierten Umweltkriterien zur Projektauswahl. Frystad hat solche Kriterien, doch ist ihre Gewichtung unklar. Im Vergleich verwendet die Region Angermanlandskusten zwar nicht ausdrücklich Umweltziele zur Projektauswahl, hat aber nichtsdestoweniger ein erwähnenswertes Umweltprojekt - das Kretsloppspark Centrum - mit einem Zentrum für Recycling-Technologien, das eine ganze Reihe verschiedener integrierter Unternehmen erfassen soll. Der Westen Schottlands hat vor

kurzem Kriterien für Umweltmanagement in sein Punktesystem für die Projektbewertung aufgenommen, dessen Ergebnisse die Projektauswahl beeinflussen.

Ein weiteres Merkmal der Umsetzung sind die bestehenden Begleitsysteme. Umweltbegleitung steht immer noch im Anfangsstadium. Sie wird in Österreich immer noch recht allgemein gehandhabt, und die Landesregierungen haben nicht genügend Mittel, um sie detaillierter auszuführen. In Aquitaine wird ein vereinfachtes System für die Bewertung der Auswirkungen nach der Umsetzung entwickelt. In Finnland sind keine spezifischen Umweltbegleitvorkehrungen getroffen worden, zum Teil aufgrund von Schwierigkeiten bei der Sammlung von Daten. Doch ist es dem Lahti Umweltforum gelungen, Umweltindikatoren für die Begleitung zu produzieren.

Drei revidierte Beobachtungsansätze zu zukünftigem Programmanagement sind erwähnenswert: erstens gewinnt die Stärkung der Umweltcharakteristiken der EPPD eindeutig an Boden; zweitens wird die Möglichkeit, eine eigene Umweltpriorität innerhalb neuer Programme zu schaffen, allgemein nicht begünstigt; und drittens kann eine Verbesserung der Umwelt als eine effektive Förderung des Wettbewerbsvorteils befürwortet werden.

3.4 Hauptthemen

Nach Prüfung der neuen Bedeutung von Umweltfragen für die regionale Wirtschaftsförderung und Identifizierung des Umweltgewinns als einem Mittel zur Konzeptualisierung der Umweltverbesserungen als einer positiven Kraft in der regionalen Wirtschaftsförderung bringt die Arbeit zum Abschluß eine Reihe wichtiger Themen zur Diskussion:

- Der Integration von Umweltfaktoren in den Wirtschaftsförderungsstrategien wird auf europäischer Ebene mehr und mehr Bedeutung beigemessen. Es wurde eine direkte und produktive Verbindung zwischen Wirtschaftsförderung und Umwelt identifiziert, die sich in verschiedenen Umweltpolitikprogrammen der Europäischen Kommission zeigt;
- Es gibt eine Bewegung zu Umweltgewinn. Ein proaktiver Ansatz zur Umwelt wird durch die neuen Richtlinien der Kommission und eine Neuausrichtung der Prioritäten der Partnerschaften auf Umweltfragen gefördert;
- Wie schnell Umweltgewinn angenommen wird, ist in den Ziel 2 Gebieten verschieden, doch scheinen alle Partnerschaften in zunehmendem Maße diesen Ansatz zu wählen;
- Die Integration der Umwelt als eine horizontale Maßnahme hat sowohl Vorteile als auch Nachteile. Umweltfaktoren werden in alle Bereiche der Programmumsetzung integriert, doch aufgrund der Breite dieses Ansatzes werden einige Umweltmaßnahmen eventuell nicht aktualisiert und einige Umweltmöglichkeiten gehen verloren.
- Direkt und indirekt nimmt die Ausrichtung auf die Umwelt zu; und

- Es besteht eine Notwendigkeit für regelmäßigen und strukturierten Informationsaustausch zwischen Partnerschaften, der die Verbesserung der Umweltbedingungen auf europäischer Ebene beschleunigen und schnelleres regionales Wirtschaftswachstum stimulieren könnten.

Tabelle 3.1: Überblick über den Umweltgehalt der EPPD

Zustand der Umwelt	Die meisten EPPDs enthalten ein allgemeines Profil der Umweltsituation in der Region. Doch gibt das Profil, mit Ausnahme von vier Regionen (Aquitaine, Westschottland, Saarland und Nordrhein-Westfalen) keine umfassenden Daten, Karten oder Graphiken.
Umweltkosten	In den meisten EPPDs konnten die Ausgaben für Umweltaktionen nicht einzeln aufgeführt werden. Informationen über Zuweisungen zeigten, daß diese sowohl innerhalb als auch zwischen Ländern variierten, von 33% in Aquitaine und 28,7% in Nordrhein-Westfalen zu weniger als 4% in Fyrstad.
Beurteilung der Umweltwirkung	Die Praxis ist hier unterschiedlich. Die meisten EPPDs erwähnen die Notwendigkeit für Beurteilungen der Wirkung auf die Umwelt, geben aber nicht den zu verwendenden Rahmen an. Einige EPPDs spezifizieren die Quantifizierung der Umweltwirkung als Teil der Selektionskriterien für Projekte (z.B. Niederösterreich, Angermanlandskusten, Westschottland, Rhone Alpes und gegebenenfalls das industrielle Südwaes).
Umweltgewinn	Die meisten Gebiete hatten positive Umweltziele und Erwartungen für ihre Programme. In einigen EPPDs werden Umweltindikatoren erwähnt, werden aber nicht allgemein als Basis für die Begleitung und Bewertung verwendet. Alle außer zwei Regionen (Angermanlandskusten und Fyrstad) erwähnten die angewandten Begleitverfahren. Im allgemeinen ist es eine Mischung von Begleitverfahren: von denen, die von nationalen Behörden ausgeführt werden (z.B. Rhone Alpes und Nord Jutland), zu den auf regionalen Ebene durch lokale Behörden und Umweltagenturen durchgeführten Verfahren. In den Regionen des Vereinigten Königreichs spezifizieren die EPPDs, daß die Zwischenevaluierung Teil des laufenden Begleitprozesses ist.
Konsultation	Die meisten Regionen konsultierten eine Reihe verschiedener Experten und Agenturen über die Umweltaspekte ihrer Programme. In Deutschland, Dänemark, Frankreich und Österreich erfaßte das formelle Konsultationsverfahren relevante nationale und regionale Behörden. In Finnland und Schweden wird die Zuständigkeit auf die regionale Ebene delegiert. In den britischen Regionen ist die Konsultation weniger formell aufgrund der Anzahl von Agenturen, die an den Partnerschaften beteiligt sind; dies wird sich ändern, wenn die Umweltagentur, die regionale Büros hat, stärker in der Management- und Umsetzungsphase beteiligt ist.
Umweltvorschriften der EU	Die meisten EPPDs enthalten eine allgemeine Erklärung der Übereinstimmung mit den Vorschriften der Europäischen Union. Einige zitieren weitere Regeln, die für spezifische Aspekte des Programms relevant sind, wie Tourismus, Städtesanierung, Wasser-, Luft- und Abfallnormen. In den deutschen, österreichischen, dänischen, finnischen und britischen Gebieten werden einige nationale Gesetze zitiert. Die EPPD Westschottlands erwähnen besonders das 5. Umweltaktionsprogramm der EG.
Relative Stärken & Schwächen	Alle untersuchten Gebiete integrierten ihre Umweltprobleme gründlich in ihren EPPDs. In einigen Fällen ist dies mehr Schein als Realität - Regionen sind mit den Fragen vertrauter geworden, doch überträgt sich dies nicht automatisch in Projekte. Zweifelsohne ist es ein Zeichen für Fortschritt bezüglich der Nachhaltigkeit, daß die Regionen eine komplexere Auffassung über die Projekte haben, die umweltmäßig machbar sind. Eine gemeinsame Schwäche der EPPDs ist der Mangel an umfassenden Umweltdaten. Viele haben auch schwache Indikatoren und die Informationen über Begleitsysteme ist recht schwach.

Thematic Paper

*Regional Environmental Integration:
Changing Perceptions and Practice within Objective 2
Programmes*

Regional Environmental Integration: Changing Perceptions and Practice within Objective 2 Programmes

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the context of EU regional policy, environmental issues are increasing in significance, most notably in the implementation of the Structural Funds, which are perceived as an area of clear interface between economic development and the environment. As the Funds continue to increase in scale (territorially and thematically), so does the potential for environmental impact. In attempts to contain this anticipated impact, the Framework Regulations for the Funds now specify that environmental factors must be incorporated into regional development programmes, and the European Commission has recently issued guidelines highlighting environmental priorities for future Objective 2 programmes.

This paper presents a review of how different regional partnerships are currently reconciling environmental issues and economic development within Objective 2 programmes. In reviewing programme management procedures, the paper has the following specific objectives:

- to illustrate the relative priority given to environment within programmes and the degree of effective environmental integration achieved;
- to identify information and responsibility networks in the provision of environmental data and in environmental decision-making;
- to evaluate the approach to environmental impact assessment within programmes, examining impact categorisation, orientation towards environmental gain and project selection procedures; and
- to review systems for monitoring and evaluation of environmental features of programmes.

The paper is structured in four parts. It begins by reviewing the changing relationship between economic development and the environment, drawing a focus on new scenarios offered through the proactive response of environmental gain. The paper then considers EU regional policy and the environment, examining relevant environmental policy initiatives, Structural Funds regulations and environmental guidance for Objective 2 programmes. Subsequently, the paper presents an analysis of experience within Objective 2 programmes, considering aspects such as environmental integration, environmental management, environmental implementation and environmental characteristics of future programmes. The paper concludes with a summary of key issues for discussion.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

2.1 International focus

In global terms, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)¹³ in 1987 was arguably the first call for integration between economic development and environmental protection. It urged that major central economic and sectoral agencies of governments should be made directly responsible and fully accountable for ensuring that their policies, programmes and budgets supported development that is ecologically as well as economically sustainable.

Acknowledging that environmental problems frequently originate from a diverse range of activities including transport, agriculture, tourism and manufacturing, the WCED emphasised that environmental policy is not simply about environment agencies and decision-makers implementing their own policies, but that other sectoral specialists must recognise the environmental dimension in their work. The report's orientation stressed interdisciplinarity and urged decision-makers not to be isolationist, but rather to think broadly and to inform and influence others constructively.

The idea of integration was taken further at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Within a sustainable development perspective, the subsequent programme of Agenda 21 addressed the integration of environment and development in decision-making, particularly at the strategic level of policy, planning and management.¹⁴ Adopting a long-term perspective and cross-sectoral approach, the programme called upon countries to ensure a three-way (economic, social and environmental) integration into decision-making at all levels in all areas of government. Such a vision assumed transparency of - and accountability for - the environmental implications of economic and sectoral policies, including systems such as integrated economic and environmental accounting (IEEA), broadening national accounts to cover additional (non-financial) areas.

Integration has also been given substantial attention by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which acknowledges integration of economic and environmental decision-making as a key challenge.¹⁵ This is based on the fundamental link between economic growth and the environment, which implies that economic and environmental policies cannot be made and implemented in isolation. Instead, instruments such as cost-benefit analysis and scientific risk assessments are identified as support mechanisms for setting environmental priorities; and achieving compatibility between environmental and sectoral economic policies is advocated as a central objective, while being subject to continued monitoring and evaluation.

The OECD analysis identifies three stages in achieving effective policy integration in this field: first, understanding the environment-economy interdependences (basically recognising and quantifying how they interact); second, exploiting opportunities for

¹³ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

¹⁴ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) *Agenda 21: The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio* UN, New York.

¹⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) *Integrating Environment and Economy: Progress in the 1990s* OECD, Paris.

achieving both environmental and economic objectives simultaneously (essentially win-win policies, breaking the link between economic growth and environmental degradation); and third, in cases where win-win scenarios appear impossible, evaluating the trade-offs among competing objectives (concentrating on factors such as environment and social equity). These stages are equally applicable at national, international and regional levels of development.

2.2 Ecological modernisation

In parallel with these international and institutional perceptions, academic analyses have developed the theory of “ecological modernisation” to explain the evolving links between economic development and environmental protection. In effect, the dominant environmentalist ideology has moved from assuming that lasting environmental protection was only attainable through a reduction and possibly even a total halt in economic development to viewing ecological considerations as providing a framework for sustainable development and constituting a necessary precondition for growth.¹⁶

Theories of ecological modernisation are still maturing, but four themes consistently emerge. First, to achieve greater effectiveness, environmental policy goals should be integrated into other policy areas of government; second, instead of managing conflict, policy-makers can benefit from a synergy between environmental protection and economic development; third, alternative and innovative policy measures should be explored, such as placing an economic value on nature alongside labour and capital, or the realignment of fiscal structures; and fourth, invention, innovation and diffusion of new clean or cleaner technologies is essential to facilitate improved environmental and economic performance.¹⁷

The explicit objective of ecological modernisation is to transform the perception of policy problems, so that a clean environment and economic development are no longer seen as conflicting goals. On the route to achieving this objective, ecological modernisation seeks to promote economic efficiency and technological innovation, while simultaneously harnessing the forces of entrepreneurship to support environmental improvement. In essence, ecological modernisation’s agenda for policy reform promotes a proactive and holistic approach to environmental protection.

2.3 From environmental loss to environmental gain

Within the conceptual framework proposed by ecological modernisation, a useful analytical tool to assist a change in perception is to consider the notion of environmental gain in accordance with the following principles.

The traditional dichotomy in economic development has consistently been portrayed as between industrial development, job-creation and improved material standards of living on the one hand, and environmental protection and conservation on the other hand. Caricatures of these extreme positions have invariably identified them as very separate and incompatible alternatives: either option is available to communities, but

¹⁶ Weale A (1993) Ecological Modernisation and the Integration of European Environmental Policy, in J Lieferrink, P Lowe & A Mol (eds.) *European Integration and Environmental Policy* John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.

¹⁷ Gouldson A and Murphy J (1996) Ecological Modernisation and the European Union *Geoforum* Vol 27 Part 1.

not both at the same time. However, this restricted view has now lost some of its currency. Whereas traditional stand-off situations still occur, typically in developing countries or areas within Southern Europe, new scenarios present a broader and still evolving perspective.

Earlier situations reflected only two choices of either *environmental loss* or *environmental protection* (see Table 2.1). The first and most enduring image of environmental loss corresponds to a *passive* scenario in which environmental degradation is regarded as inevitable, with increasing pollution, loss of wildlife and habitats and blighting of aesthetic landscapes. The second stage - environmental protection - is realised through *reactive* measures such as legislation, regulations and physical planning instruments, in which public authorities would seek to safeguard the environment as much as possible through, for example, directing development to less sensitive areas, retaining landscape features, and imposing environment-protecting planning conditions.

*Table 2.1: Developmental Stages in Integrating Economic Development and Environmental Management*¹⁸

ENVIRONMENTAL LOSS (<i>passive</i>)	ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (<i>reactive</i>)	ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN (<i>proactive</i>)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • habitat destruction • loss of plants and wildlife • water pollution • emissions to air • soil contamination • aesthetic losses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning conditions • retention of trees etc • filter systems • land-use zoning • brownfield sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reforestation • land reclamation • pollution reduction • water purification • air purification • ecological enrichment • awareness-raising

Emerging scenarios are now extending the continuum to incorporate scope for a *proactive* response in the form of *environmental gain*. This allows for positive and deliberate action in which individual economic programmes not only protect the environment but also enhance environmental conditions. This would be achieved through, for example, reclaiming derelict land, treating contaminated land, reducing baseline emissions levels into water, air or soil, planting new areas of forestry, supporting production modifications or assisting building refurbishments which reduce energy consumption.

Accordingly, this new perspective and course of action offers more constructive and practical opportunities to utilise the momentum of economic development to improve environmental conditions. The important distinction between environmental improvement and environmental gain amounts to more than just terminology - the difference lies in the change in emphasis, which leads to a change in thinking, giving environmental conditions an integrated and equal status within economic development.

¹⁸ Clement K (1997) From Environmental Loss to Environmental Gain: Multi-Disciplinary Teams in European Economic Development, in P Strachan & J Moxen (eds.) *Managing Green Teams* Greenleaf Publications, Sheffield.

3. EU REGIONAL POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Over the last ten years, several factors have contributed to raise the importance of the issue of environment within the context of EU regional policy. Particularly since the mid-1980s, the EU Environmental Action Programmes have introduced the concept of environmental integration.¹⁹ Whilst acknowledging sustainable development as an essential component of economic growth, the Third Environmental Action Programme (1982-86) called for a strategy to integrate environmental policy with socio-economic development i.e. introducing environmental factors into activities such as agriculture, industry, energy, transport and tourism; and the Fourth Environmental Action Programme (1987-92) further developed the theme of integration while advancing the idea of environmental responsibility.

The Fifth (and current) Environmental Action Programme appeared in 1993, heralded as a significant step in developing a long-term strategy for sustainable development. In addressing values, it has sought to change current development practices, achieve societal change, broaden the range of instruments used and target measures on a sectoral basis. The emerging technique of strategic environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes²⁰ is also supported in the Fifth Programme, particularly in relation to sectoral and spatial planning, where its relevance for regional development is highlighted.²¹

Preparations for the Single European Market also considered the likely large-scale environmental consequences of the forthcoming European economic development. Attention was focused specifically on the Structural Funds, given their perceived environmental impact through financial support for projects in manufacturing industry, transport, energy or tourism infrastructure, culminating in a series of critical assessments focusing on this aspect of the environmental impact of economic development.²²

Environmental protection within EU regional policy relies upon the Structural Funds Framework Regulations, now revised to incorporate a requirement for environmental appraisal.²³ Article 8.4 of these regulations states that, in preparing Regional Development Plans (RDPs) or Single Programming Documents (SPDs), Member States are obliged to carry out four environmental tasks:

- prepare an appraisal of the state of the environment in the region;
- evaluate the expected environmental impact of the programme;
- comply with European Community environmental law and policy; and
- involve environmental authorities in programme preparation and implementation.

¹⁹ Johnson S & Corcelle G (1995) *The Environmental Policy of the European Communities* Second Edition, Kluwer Law International, The Hague.

²⁰ Clement K & Bachtler J (1997) Regional Development and Environmental Gain: Strategic Assessment in the EU Structural Funds, *European Environment* Vol7 No 1

²¹ Official Journal No C138, 17 May (1993) and COM (92) 23 Final *Towards Sustainability - A European Community Programme of Policy and Action in relation to the Environment and Sustainable Development*, 27.3.92.

²² Baldock D & Corrie H (1989) *The EC Structural Funds: Environmental Briefing* Institute for European Environmental Policy, London; Baldock D & Wenning M (1990) *The EC Structural Funds: Environmental Briefing 2* Institute for European Environmental Policy, London.

²³ CEC (1993) *Community Structural Funds 1994-1999: Revised Regulations and Comments* Commission of the European Communities, Brussels.

The first programmes were agreed by the Commission and the Member State authorities during the late-1980s. Indicating priority areas for Community assistance, they were essentially political documents that made little reference to the environment. Few of them pushed environmental protection as an objective, and where this did happen, it generally occurred within infrastructure programmes.²⁴ In essence, these programmes were perceived as economic and social - not environmental - strategies; consequently, job-creation and economic development took precedence over environmental protection. This was underlined in a report prepared by the European Court of Auditors in 1992 which found little evidence to support any claims of environmental conformity within the Structural Funds.²⁵

Further insight was provided by the 1994 Interim Review of the Fifth Environmental Action Programme. It noted that while there had been progress on the integration of environmental approaches both within the Community and individual Member States, sustainable development was still seen as the business of those who deal directly with the environment. Moreover, it observed that:

"strategic assessments of the impact of policy initiatives on the environment have yet to take root in most of the Member States .. and ... initiatives on the introduction and implementation of appropriate mechanisms to ensure that environment and sustainable development concerns are considered in new policy actions need to be speeded up".²⁶

Furthermore:

"Integration of environmental concerns needs to be better reflected in the regional development plans and proposals for funding being developed by Member States".

In response to the low level of effective integration and impact assessment in the first programming period, the Commission has issued notes for guidance for Objective 2 regions in the second programming period (1997-1999), and these notes specifically list "Environment and Sustainable Development" amongst the new priorities. Acknowledging that the complementary nature of the environment and regional development is increasingly being recognised, the guidance states that the horizontal character of the environment needs to be borne in mind in the definition and implementation of other Community policies and especially in the Structural Funds programmes.

Two main themes are advocated to be pursued more vigorously in new Objective 2 programmes. The first relates to the traditional approach of improving the physical environment to increase the attractiveness of the region for business development; the second is more forward-looking and seeks future competitive advantage by exploiting eco-products, environmental services, environmental technologies, energy-saving measures and improved production processes.

²⁴ Woodford J (1991) *Conflict or Convergence? Environmental Priorities and the Structural Funds* Environmental Policy Discussion Paper No.1, EPRC, University of Strathclyde.

²⁵ Official Journal No C 245, 23 September (1992) *Court of Auditors Special Report No.3/92* concerning the Environment together with the Commission's replies.

²⁶ CEC (1994) *Interim Review of Implementation of The European Community Programme of Policy and Action in relation to the environment and sustainable development "Towards Sustainability"* COM (94) 453 Final, Brussels.

On the first theme, any proposal for the development and improvement of industrial sites should be linked to the stimulation of local development activity, for example meeting the needs of inward investors, local SMEs or stimulating growth in new sectoral specialisms. Other aspects are linked to the direct needs of firms, including the development of environmental infrastructure such as waste recycling facilities, removing pollution and protecting or enhancing areas of ecological interest. Co-financing these measures must also be shown to enhance economic development.

With regard to the second theme, additional emphasis should now be given to forward-looking measures as a potential source of future competitive advantage, linking ecological awareness with economic growth opportunities. Examples might include environmental measures for industry, energy-saving projects, advice for industry, awareness raising on environmental legislation, green business development and marketing support. The broad aims are to improve the environmental performance of business generally and to develop specialist environment-related sectors.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCE AMONG OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMMES

Objective 2 regions are clearly under increasing pressure to adopt a more positive and proactive approach to realising environmental gain within regional development programmes. To what extent is this influence being translated into practical policy action?

The following section focuses on the environmental appraisal of the management and implementation of regional programmes from the IQ-Net partnerships in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The appraisal is divided into four broad themes: integrating environmental factors; environmental management; environmental implementation; and future programmes.

²⁷

4.1 Integrating environmental factors

Comparative assessment of Objective 2 programmes reveals a growing awareness and understanding of environmental issues among programme managers and partnerships. In part, there is a “cultural change” underway with respect to the role of environmental objectives, priorities and measures - although to varying degrees. In accordance with the trends identified by ecological modernisation theories, the fundamental and essential links between environmental issues and industrial development are being acknowledged explicitly. However, as in the Ångermanlandskusten programme, although this perception has a direct practical influence on programme design, the environmental objectives can subsequently be diminished in importance by the administering authority in favour of economic development priorities.

In some cases, the prospect of adding environmental issues to economic development strategies represents a major step for participating authorities. In the UK, the West of Scotland partnership has succeeded in making the transformation from regarding

²⁷ The environmental content, approach and relative strengths and weaknesses of the individual SPDs are summarised in tabular form in Appendix 1.

environmental features as restricted to obvious physical measures -such as tree planting, “sites and premises” and derelict land reclamation - to perceive them in more broad-based terms encompassing energy efficiency, environmentally-friendly materials and transport modes. Similarly in Finland, experience with programme implementation has resulted in environmental factors receiving much greater attention in the new programme, reflecting a considerable increase in environment-related expertise being brought in to assist and inform SPD realisation.

The factors determining environmental integration relate partly to strict regulatory frameworks, legal culture and pressure from environmental authorities. In some countries, existing regulatory frameworks and legal norms have often acted as direct influences on the environmental material included within SPDs. In Austria, Denmark and Germany, national environmental regulations and authorities are considered very strong, and this reflects a broad general awareness of environmental issues. Procedural safeguards are also considered very good, and - in the Danish and Austrian contexts - this has reduced the amount of environmental content considered necessary for inclusion within programmes.

Elsewhere, environmental organisations have played key roles. In France, important influences came from the Commission, which was involved especially in framing environmental policies in the Poitou Charentes case, and from DATAR through information dissemination at the beginning of each round, providing summaries of French SPDs highlighting examples of best practice under a variety of headings, including environment. In Nordrhein Westfalen, the entire SPD was discussed with the *Land* Environment Ministry. Following these initial discussions, the Ministry assumed responsibility for implementation of certain environmental components of the programme (excluding land reclamation) and is involved in overseeing procedures down to project level. For South Wales, the Welsh Environment Agency was instrumental in reviewing the SPD using the methodology of strategic environmental assessment to indicate that the programme had the potential to produce both beneficial and detrimental impacts. In this instance, the approach significantly modified and improved upon the standard methodology which the Welsh Office partnership provided for regional offices. In comparison, Strathclyde European Partnership engaged in a productive debate with Friends of the Earth and the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities on the question of economic development and sustainability and how it could affect the west of Scotland. Parallel requests from the Commission for environmental impact statements relating to Structural Funds allocation rounded off the institutional focus.

4.2 Environmental management

One of the more challenging aspects of securing environmental gain concerns the form of institutional arrangements utilised to manage the programmes environmentally, and the implications that these arrangements might have. In practice, environmental management within Objective 2 regions generally reflects existing structures, national regulatory systems or administrative schemes. Within these categories, the surveyed programmes revealed at least three different models:

- systems reflecting the existing order, with predictable interactions;
- specialist systems, which may delay realisation of environmental objectives; and
- innovative initiatives.

4.3 Systems reflecting the existing order

Predictable interactions between economic development and the environment are evident in the Nordic countries, reflecting the advanced legal and institutional frameworks within which the programme partnerships operate. In the Fyrstad programme, the County Administration Board (CAB) - acting as the competent environmental authority - followed its involvement in SPD preparation with representation on the Programme Management Committee. As a matter of procedure, every project is sent to the environmental departments in the CAB for approval. This has not resulted in project applications being rejected, essentially because of the existing regulatory high standards. A similar situation exists in Denmark, with all projects that might potentially affect the environment being sent to the (county) Department of the Environment. Again, the emphasis is on ensuring that the proposed development does not contravene existing regulations, and consequently this stage might be regarded as a necessary formality rather than expected to reveal new insights.

In Finland, the environmental authorities participated in the drafting of the regional programmes and in evaluating their environmental impacts, and the national Ministry of the Environment has responsibility for overseeing the environmental management aspects of the programme. Independent working groups operate at regional level (formed of regional councils and environment district offices), where programme environmental management is carried out by the same teams that prepared the programmes. In Päijät-Häme, the Regional Council have introduced an *EnvGrid* as part of the planning process. The purpose of the grid is to map the state of the environment in the area. The information is then utilised to gauge the positive and negative impacts of development projects such as housing. This process is described on the Council's web site²⁸.

An example from outside the Nordic countries is presented by the German programmes, in which environmental management reflects the existing order. In both the cases of Nordrhein Westfalen and the Saarland, the Objective 2 programme fits into existing *Land* policy, and consequently the Environment Ministries assume responsibility for parts of the programme which lie within their conventional remit.

4.4 Specialist systems

An alternative approach to environmental management is to devise specialist complementary systems for steering economic development towards environmentally-advanced practices, although such a structure has both advantages and disadvantages. In Austria, both SPDs are administered by programme managers, but thereafter monies are distributed through funding agencies and departments using existing schemes. This means that programme environmental management will be carried out by the departments that administer the relevant schemes. Whereas all projects must necessarily comply with environmental regulations, current specialist environmental schemes include support for industrial waste/sewage measures (administered by the Steiermark government), assistance for environmental protection measures (Niederösterreich government), and two parallel schemes from the Ministry of Environment which are administered by the *Österreichische Kommunal Kredit* (ÖKK). In practice, these schemes are differentiated by their restricted eligibility for environmental investments that exceed minimum legal

²⁸ <http://www.reg.fi/phame/grid/dir2.htm>

requirements. Although forward-looking in design, this form of scheme-dependence has in effect slowed SPD implementation, particularly since the Commission has taken lengthy periods to approve the Steiermark and ÖKK environmental schemes (delaying their realisation until approximately two years after the programme was launched).

4.5 Innovative initiatives

Among examples of innovative environmental management, the French region of Aquitaine has encouraged agencies which were not previously environmentally-oriented to change their perceptions and so allow a wider range of activities to be undertaken. As a result, current services include advice on environmental audits, environmental technology and environmental action plans, and the provision of collective services (including environmental expertise) at Lacq for chemical firms (see box). This measure has effectively raised the profile of the region environmentally, while generating an improved image for attracting potential investors.

Lacq 'Pôle Environnement'

The centre of environmental expertise being established in Aquitaine will be a collective facility providing services and advice to firms (in the chemicals sector in particular) in the field of environmental protection and technologies. Once fully established, the facility will advise companies, undertake a research programme on their behalf, invest in joint equipment and provide a series of other services. One of its main impacts will be to signal Aquitaine as a region with an industrial sector which is environmentally aware.

The idea for the initiative came from a group of local public sector organisations who realised the need for a regional facility to promote environmental issues and cost-effectively find innovative solutions to environmental problems. As interest grew in the idea, a group of financing partners was progressively assembled and then an application made for Structural Fund support to help the idea move forward.

In addition, as identified earlier in the context of South Wales, the intervention of the Environment Agency radically re-oriented the approach of the Welsh Office towards environmental management, resulting in the application of strategic assessment to identify positive and negative environmental features of the proposed programme.

4.6 Environmental implementation

One of the drawbacks of environmental practice in Objective 2 regions is that strengths in environmental integration and management are not carried through to the implementation phase. The most striking element is the lack of continuity which might be expected from highly-regulated countries through to practice. Two issues form the main focus of current implementation.

First, rather than adopting proactive approaches to programme environmental management, project selection criteria mostly reflect reactive (or even passive) approaches. One example is the Nordjylland programme, which restricts environmental criteria to general environmental requirements (which any project would be required fulfil), amounting to a passive/barely reactive response to environmental threats. Furthermore, it includes no proactive promotion of projects

with a positive environmental impact. The involvement of the Department of the Environment is only to ensure the legality of projects, not to consider setting priorities. However, some projects with a special environmental focus have been given a higher priority. This approach is typical of several Objective 2 areas.

In France, there is a standard national approach to carrying out environmental impact assessments, so there is no discussion of the approach to impacts in programmes. In Aquitaine, all project applicants must indicate the likely environmental impact of projects, but the main question asked about proposals is whether or not they respect the rules with regard to environmental standards. It is beyond the remit of the organisations involved to insist on the environment being accommodated in a more holistic way. For Rhône-Alpes, by contrast, measures with a positive environmental impact are set out in the SPD environmental profile. Negative environmental impacts are not identified.

In Austria, there are no centrally-defined environmental project selection criteria, and individual funding departments must devise their own criteria. In Fyrstad, the programme's project selection criteria include that projects should build and further develop the strengths of the region and respect natural, cultural and environmental values. However, the exact weighting given to environmental features in project assessment is unclear. In comparison, Ångermanlandskusten does not explicitly use environmental goals in project selection, but it has nonetheless approved an environmental project worth highlighting - the Kretsloppspark Centrum - comprising an ecocyclic centre expected to contain a range of integrated companies (see below).

The exception amongst Objective 2 programmes within this category is the West of Scotland, where recent revisions have incorporated criteria for environmental management within the scoring system devised for project selection. Applicants who fail to complete or to return this section of the form automatically lose points from their potential overall score. These criteria were devised by an environmental expert specifically to tighten up this aspect of project selection within the SPD, bringing together the knowledge gained from experience of earlier programmes.

Kretsloppspark/Centrum

The purpose of the Kretsloppspark/Centrum is to build an ecocyclic centre comprising a large number of partially-integrated companies, but also including suitable research and laboratory facilities. The companies involved should have differing competences and use different methods and processes, but all of them should be companies dealing with recycling and deproduction activities. Examples of appropriate business activities are recycling of refrigerators and tyres and deproduction of plastic materials and glass.

The project applicant and responsible authority is the Municipality of Ornskoldsvik. As a local authority, the municipality can smooth the path for the ecocyclic centre in terms of infrastructure, land, regulations etc. The project's most important co-operation partner is Bjasta Atervinning AB, a company which deals exclusively with recycling. Co-operation with universities and departments of environmental studies is also an important part of the project.

The project is expected to generate 50 new jobs as well as five new companies, and beneficial spin-offs are anticipated for the transport and service sectors. So far, the project is proceeding according to plan and timetable, with only small technical difficulties to be overcome. The total project turnover is SEK 1,100,000 and the ERDF contribution amounts to SEK 350,000.

A second feature of environmental implementation is that environmental monitoring is still at an early stage of development. In Austria, existing environmental monitoring indicators are extremely general, but more exact and detailed monitoring is technically difficult and can be resource intensive. The *Land* government would not have the necessary time or resources to carry out more detailed monitoring checks, and firms would be equally unwilling. On the monitoring form, the environmental impact assessment required of projects is also very general. More detailed questions were considered, but rejected to minimise complexity, and the additional administrative burden which might discourage companies from applying for support.

In Aquitaine, the post-implementation assessment of environment-related projects is considered to be straightforward, but projects in other areas present more difficulties. In Sweden, Ångermanlandskusten undertakes environmental monitoring of projects, some of this by self-assessment. This originates from national legislative requirements, not from the SPD. In Fyrstad, in comparison, no specific monitoring arrangements have been made for environmental matters.

In Finland, monitoring problems include the difficulties of gathering data in eligible areas, particularly since each region may be covered by several administrative areas. However, one project which has produced environmental indicators for monitoring over time is the Lahti Environmental Forum in the City of Lahti. This project involves collaboration between a number of public authorities, carrying elements of regional planning through to regional development strategy.

Lahti Environmental Forum

The Lahti Environmental Forum was established at the end of 1993. The forum is an initiative of the City of Lahti and its activities are funded by different municipalities, EU funds, and national regional development funds. The aim of the forum is to adopt a common approach to the promotion of sustainable development in the Lahti area and to meet the challenge of Agenda 21.

The Forum is composed of around 90 participants, representing 40 different organisations (municipalities, different local communities, organisations, companies etc). Its objectives and proposals for action are formed by working groups.

The objectives of the Forum are as follows:

- *to develop and implement local Agenda 21;*
- *to organise different events relating to: industry (campaigning for environmental auditing in SMEs and eco-competition for shops); land use (seminar on the future and problems of transport; monitoring of planning activities); tourism (waste recycling event and guides for residents) etc; and*
- *to develop local indicators for sustainable development. These indicators will allow the evaluation of current conditions and help establish objectives for sustainable development. The participants of the Forum would then propose ways for different regional policy actors to take these objectives into account.*

5. FUTURE PROGRAMMES

Experience of SPD implementation and evaluation enables new or revised approaches to be brought to programme management. With regard to the environmental dimension, three observations can be made:

- there is a clear momentum building up to strengthen the environmental features of SPDs;
- the option of creating a separate environmental priority within new programmes is generally not favoured; and
- environmental improvement is being promoted as effectively assisting competitive advantage.

5.1 Environmental momentum

As the previous sections have illustrated, partnerships are becoming better informed with regard to environmental attributes of programmes, including developing new approaches to environmental integration, devising methodologies to assess the strategic environmental elements of programmes, developing indicators for environmental monitoring and acknowledging the need for environmental categories of project selection criteria.

Examples of this momentum can be drawn from France, Germany and Finland. The Aquitaine programme is currently developing a fuller and more structured approach to the environment, including the formation of an environmental working group to consider systematically the possible environmental impact of each measure. Early work on preliminary classification in this area has reviewed impacts within the broad categories of positive, negative (but justifiable), and negligible.

In Germany, the new programme for Nordrhein Westfalen (1997-99) includes four principle measures which explicitly target the environment. The programme also contains measures which lead indirectly to environmental improvements (e.g. new technologies) and measures which tolerate no net reduction in environmental balance.

Lastly, in Finland, the new draft programme has attempted to include arrangements for appraisal of the regional environment and assessing likely environmental impact - especially at project level - and on improving implementation procedures. It is expected that environmental criteria will be taken into consideration in project selection criteria and in project monitoring. Reflecting the underdevelopment of regional environmental data management, project application forms will in future include impact assessments similar to those used in physical planning.

5.2 Separate environmental priority within programmes

In general, partnerships are not in favour of creating separate environmental priorities within programmes, but instead they prefer to treat environment as a horizontal issue. This course of action appears to parallel the Commission view, as the recent new draft programme for Nordjylland was dissuaded from isolating or emphasising environment in this manner. Nevertheless, this Danish partnership remains fully committed to integrating environmental concerns and views business development and environmental issues holistically.

The West of Scotland programme is another example of a partnership deliberately moving away from the prospect of a separate environmental priority, preferring to realise environmental objectives through other programme areas, with environmental advisers participating in project selection groups.

However, in complete contrast to the general trend, one area in France which lies outside the IQ-Net coverage - the Bourgogne region - is proposing to dedicate one priority entirely to the theme of environment.

5.3 Environmental improvement assisting competitive advantage

In general, partnerships have moved away from the restricted, traditional view of promoting physical environmental improvements as attractive to new investors. Nevertheless, there is still advantage to be gained from drawing attention to the economic benefits of environmental excellence, whether in company transformation (through technology, training etc) or in market-creation (through identifying demand for new specialisms). The new draft of the Nordjylland SPD acknowledges companies' drive for competitive advantage, and accordingly it is intended that the environment will feature as a high priority in motivating industry to compete for the benefits of programme funds; similarly, in Sweden's Fyrstad SPD, environment is seen as a positive issue for promoting business development, while remaining directly linked to job-creation.

6. DISCUSSION

This paper has considered the new significance of environmental issues within regional economic development. It has shown that from the level of global and international concern, environmental factors have quickly risen up the agenda to become a key feature for integration within current and future EU Objective 2 programmes. Environmental gain has been identified as means of conceptualising environmental improvement as a positive force in regional economic development, all within the theoretical framework of ecological modernisation.

The environmental experience of Objective 2 programmes has been reviewed, with comparative insights identifying elements which determine the environmental characteristics of programmes, the varied institutional arrangements utilised to manage programmes environmentally, and examples of progress achieved to date on environmental aspects of project selection criteria and programme monitoring. Finally, the theme of new or revised approaches to environmental management in future programmes was addressed.

A number of key issues have emerged from the paper, and they can be summarised as follows.

First, at European level, increasing importance is being placed on integrating environmental factors into economic development strategies. International initiatives have broadly raised environmental awareness, and this has influenced perceptions in both public and private sector activities. The momentum initiated in the 1980s has been sustained through the 1990s with more sophisticated syntheses of environmental factors and public policy initiatives. With the emergence and acknowledgement of ecological modernisation, a direct and productive link has been identified between economic development and environment, and elements of this approach are apparent in the various environmental policy programmes launched by the European Commission.

Second, with a view to achieving sustainable development, there is strong evidence in Objective 2 programmes of moves towards environmental gain and proactive approaches to environment in SPD preparation and implementation. In addition to new Commission guidelines establishing environmental priorities for Objective 2 regions, partnerships are increasingly taking environmental issues into account directly through incorporation of state-of-the-environment reviews, promotion of environmental considerations across whole programmes, and exploiting opportunities for deriving environmental benefits through SPD implementation.

Third, the pace of progress towards environmental gain is differentiated across Objective 2 regions. This can be expected to vary with location, but all partnerships appear to be incrementally adopting this approach. Some regions have adjusted more quickly than others on account of background factors such as legal culture, regulatory regimes, general environmental awareness and pressure group activity. The participation of environmental authorities and external experts in programme development and implementation is also a key element of this progress, and this has clearly enhanced partnerships' perception of the role and potential of environmental improvement within programmes. It is anticipated that each new round of programmes will result in better environmental integration.

Fourth, integrating the environment as a horizontal measure is a key strategic decision for partnerships, and this contains both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages of the horizontal approach include the potential to see environmental factors reaching into all areas of programme implementation and - as a corollary - being considered in an integrated fashion at all fundamental stages of decision-making. However, disadvantages include the possibility that in such a broad approach, some environmental measures may not be realised, and the potential for actively and overtly exploiting the environment for attracting new investment and job-creation may be lost.

Fifth, as the direct focus on environment increases, the indirect focus is also increasing, and this is worthy of greater consideration. As the monitoring of environmental projects increases, environmental monitoring of other projects must also improve. Whereas it is expected that environmental projects by definition should be environmentally beneficial - and so perhaps require less monitoring - projects in other areas hold the greater potential for realising environmental gain by utilising the forces of development already set in motion.

Lastly, the differentiated pace and stages of development between regions means that there is a need for regular and structured exchange of information between partnerships on progress in developing project selection criteria and environmental monitoring systems. For a number of reasons, some partnerships will inevitably devote more time and priority to refining and evaluating project selection and monitoring systems, and the most advantageous outcome of this work would be to share and further develop the results with other regions. In addition to accelerating the improvement in environmental conditions on a European scale, this measure could also stimulate faster regional economic growth through focusing and directing positive environmental impact.

ANNEX: Regional Environmental Integration

The following tables outline the environmental content of the Single Programming Documents for all the regions in the IQ-NET Consortium.

Overview	Table I	Environmental Content of SPDs
Austria	Table II Table III	Niederösterreich Steiermark
Denmark	Table IV	Nordjylland
Finland	Table V	Finnish National SPD
France	Table VI Table VII	Aquitaine Rhône Alpes
Germany	Table VIII Table IX	Nordrhein Westfalen Saarland
Sweden	Table X Table XI	Ångermanlandskusten Fyrstad
UK	Table XII Table XIII	Industrial South Wales Strathclyde / West of Scotland

Table I: Overview of the Environmental Content of SPDs

<i>State of the environment</i>	Most SPDs include a general profile of the environmental situation in the region. However, with the exception of four regions (Aquitaine, West of Scotland, Saarland and Nordrhein Westfalen) the profile does not incorporate comprehensive data, graphs maps or illustrations.
<i>Environmental expenditure</i>	In most SPDs, expenditure on environmental actions could not be disaggregated. Information which was available on allocations showed that these varied both within and between countries, ranging from 33% in Aquitaine and 28.7% in Nordrhein Westfalen to less than 4% in Fyrstad.
<i>Environmental impact assessment</i>	Practice varies. Most SPDs mention the requirement for environmental impact assessments but do not specify the framework to be used. Some SPDs specify the quantification of environmental impact as part of the selection criteria for projects (eg Lower Austria, Ångermanlandskusten, West of Scotland, Rhône Alpes and, where relevant, Industrial South Wales).
<i>Environmental gain</i>	Most areas had positive environmental targets and expectations for their programmes. Environmental indicators are mentioned in some SPDs but are not as broadly utilised as a basis for monitoring and evaluation. All but two regions (Ångermanlandskusten and Fyrstad) mentioned the monitoring procedures which are being applied. Generally, there is a mixture of monitoring procedures ranging from those carried out by national authorities (eg. Rhône Alpes and North Jutland) to those undertaken at regional level by local authorities and environment agencies. In the UK regions SPDs specify that interim evaluation is part of the ongoing monitoring process.
<i>Consultation</i>	Most regions consulted a range of experts and agencies on environment aspects of their programme. In Germany, Denmark, France and Austria, the formalised consultation procedure included relevant national and regional authorities. In Finland and Sweden, competence is delegated to regional level. In the UK regions, consultation has been less formalised because of the number of agencies involved in the partnerships; this will change as the Environment Agency, which has regional offices, is set to become more involved at the management and implementation stages.
<i>EU environmental rules</i>	Most SPDs have a general statement of compliance with European Union rules. Some cite further rules relevant to specific aspects of the programme including Tourism, Urban Renewal, Water, Air and Waste standards. In the German, Austrian, Danish, Finnish and UK areas some national legislation is cited. The West of Scotland SPD specifically mentions the EC's 5 th Environmental Action Programme.
<i>Relative strengths & weaknesses</i>	All the areas under study thoroughly integrated environmental concerns into their SPDs. In some cases, this is more apparent than real - regions have become familiar with the issues but this does not necessarily translate into projects. Clearly, a mark of progress with regard to sustainability is that regions have a more complex view of the projects which are environmentally feasible. A common weakness among the SPDs is the lack of comprehensive environmental data. Many also have weak indicators, and information about monitoring

	systems is poor.
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Table II - Austria - Niederösterreich

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: LOWER AUSTRIA	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD provides general coverage of the environmental situation which includes a description of the legal and administrative framework. There is some basic data and some statistics.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	N/A
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The anticipated impact of measures is outlined in the SPD. It also mentions the need for larger projects to undergo an impact assessment but there are no details of this procedure.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Forward looking approach links rational use of resources to improved environmental quality. Strict national regulatory system and examination in project selection procedure. Environment indicators must be specified in application. Monitoring by Federal Ministry and OKK.
CONSULTATION	Specifies the involvement of Land and federal authorities.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	General statement of compliance with European Union rules. Austria brings high environmental protection standards into EU.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	National standards high, good integration and monitoring. Environmental actions and goals are included in a number of measures such as support for alternative and renewable energy sources. All measures describe potential effects on the regional environment. However, the results are descriptive rather than quantitative, not being backed by statistical indicators.

Table III - Austria - Steiermark

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: STEIERMARK	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a good general description of the environmental situation which includes a description of the legal and administrative framework. There are some basic data and statistics.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	N/A
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The expected qualitative effects of measures are stated.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	While not explicitly mentioned this is included in the environmental initiatives. However, it is not quantified. The approach includes the notion of sustainable technology. Monitoring is carried out by the Steiermark government.
CONSULTATION	The consultation procedure is not specified.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	There is general statement of compliance with European Union rules and reference to a number of directives. Austria brings high environmental protection standards into the EU.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	National standards high and there is good integration of environmental concerns into the programme with a good monitoring system. However, firms often perceive environmental considerations as an additional cost.

Table IV - Denmark - North Jutland

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: NORTH JUTLAND	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a profile which cites high environmental standards, gives an account of environmental protection in the area, provides an outline of the planning system, identifies the main sources of pollution and lists the relevant authorities.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	N/A
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	A list of expected effects is provided. All projects will be assessed by the Department of the Environment.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	No environmental priorities in the programme, however the SPD does indicate that positive effects expected from some tourism projects. National regulations include environmental appraisal for projects. There are no quantitative indicators. Monitoring is carried out by national and regional authorities.
CONSULTATION	The SPD mentions consultation with national and regional authorities and environment agencies.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	There is a standard compliance clause with European Union regulations. National regulations are also mentioned underlining the high standard which operates.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	Environmental elements of the SPD are weak. There seems to be a greater focus on regulation compliance than on the encouragement of projects. There is strict implementation of national standards.

Table V - Finland - National SPD

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: FINLAND	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	An assessment of the environment appears in Annex 2 to the SPD. Specific problems are identified, including incidences where control limits are exceeded.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	17%
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	This is mentioned as integral part of the programme. There is also assessment of environmental impact at project level.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Aims for positive social and ecological effects in key sectors. There are specific project selection criteria. Indicators included in measures with environmental element. Monitoring takes place at regional level.
CONSULTATION	Authorities consulted include the regional councils and the environmental district offices.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	Standard compliance clause with Finnish and European Union regulations. The SPD demonstrates knowledge of EU regulations
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	Environment well integrated into strategy. However, management of environmental issues in Structural Fund programmes is underdeveloped.

Table VI - France - Aquitaine

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: AQUITAINE	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	Comprehensive environmental profile, outlining main environmental strengths and weaknesses, assets and problems. A list of measures in place to protect the environment is included, as is standardised information for each of the three eligible zones; zone requirements are outlined. Accompanying maps illustrate the location of protected areas (natural and architectural), pollution black-spots and surface water quality. It is focused and directly relevant to the Objective 2 programme.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	33.6%
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Overall impact addressed within environmental profile. There will be both an interim and an ex-post evaluation of environmental impact. All project applicants are obliged to indicate impact, especially in relation to tourism projects.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Positive impacts set out in measures. Project selection criteria included where relevant. Indicators not described in detail. Monitoring procedures are being improved, a committee has been appointed to set out the revised framework.
CONSULTATION	This is not specified, there is a standard procedure in France.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	There is a general statement of compliance with EU rules.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	Good integration, wider involvement and use of training. Monitoring is good. Some potentially beneficial projects stymied by regulations. Overall environmental impacts of the programme not quantified in advance, nor was a methodology identified. Quality of regional environment seen as essential to underpinning the regeneration of the economy; evaluations indicate environment successfully integrated as both a horizontal and policy-specific element.

Table VII - France - Rhône Alpes

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: RHÔNE ALPES	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a general description of the situation regarding waste, sites, water, noise pollution and an outline of the legal and administrative framework. The competent authorities are identified along with the impact of the plan, the strategy and measures. There are some basic statistics.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	24.1%
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The impact section does not specify frameworks for assessment of projects or the programme as a whole, nor does it predict what the impacts could be.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	The positive environmental impact is set out. There are environmental criteria in project appraisal. There are environmental indicators relating mainly to Priority 3. Monitoring is not set out, but there is a standard procedure for all French regions.
CONSULTATION	Two agencies are consulted, DRIRE and DIREN. The consultation procedures are standard in France.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	There is a standard compliance clause with European Union regulations. There are also references to some specific regulations in the SPD.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	There is some progress in integrating environmental concerns into the Structural Fund programme, but ostensibly as a result of external pressure. Environment appears to be an additional element of the strategy rather than an integral part of it. .

Table VIII - Germany - Nordrhein Westfalen

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: NORDRHEIN WESTFALEN	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a general environmental profile which emphasises the areas requiring attention. There are some basic statistics and some illustrations.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	28.7%
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Plan subject to obligatory specialised assessment by the relevant Land agency. Selection criteria at project level are not mentioned.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Environmental protection is seen a social necessity and an economic opportunity. Some targets and indicators are identified, but project criteria not specified. All projects are monitored in a computerised system.
CONSULTATION	Plan subject to obligatory specialised assessment by the relevant Land agency.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	There is a standard compliance clause with European Union regulations.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	There is good integration of environmental concerns into the programme within the context of a strong national regulatory framework. Many projects are an example of good practice with a clear focus on environmental gain.

Table IX - Germany - Saarland

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: SAARLAND	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a general profile of the environmental situation with assets and problems outlined. There are some data and illustrations.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	N/A
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The plan is subject to obligatory specialised assessment by the relevant Land agency. Selection criteria at project level are not mentioned.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Environmental protection is seen a social necessity and an economic opportunity. Some targets and indicators are identified, although project criteria are not specified. All projects are monitored in a computerised system.
CONSULTATION	The SPD outlines the provision that in questions of environmental protection, the Ministry of Environment will be part of implementation process for certain measures.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	There is a standard clause outlining overall compliance with European Union regulations.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	There is good integration of environmental concerns into the programme and a strong regulatory framework at national level. Many projects are an example of good practice with a clear focus on environmental gain.

Table X - Sweden - Ångermanlandskusten

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: ÅNGERMANLANDSKUSTEN	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a brief outline the environmental conditions and problem areas. There is no statistical or graphic information provided.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	N/A
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	There is no mention of this at programme or project level. EIA is considered to be the responsibility of the national authorities.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Environment treated in a positive way as means of promoting environmental gain through the <i>greening</i> of conventional industry. There are no indicators, targets or monitoring procedures in the SPD. The selection criteria do include environmental objectives.
CONSULTATION	County Administrative Boards (CABS) have responsibility at county level and are also represented in the Programme Management Committee.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	The SPD refers to a number of directives and rules and underlines overall compliance with European Union legislation.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	Environment horizontal issue, incorporated in all actions. Project monitoring good in line with national requirements. Environment not a big issue in terms of Structural Fund management

Table XI - Sweden - Fyrstad

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: FYRSTAD	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD outlines the key environmental problems in region, and identifies emissions which exceed control limits. There are no maps or diagrams.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	Measure devoted to the promotion of environmental technology has a budget of 0.6 MECU (3.15 percent of the total SPD budget)
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The SPD attempts to quantify positive environmental impact of actions by identifying measurable goals or outputs in terms of job creation, environmentally-improved products and companies certified with European or ISO environmental quality standards.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Environment treated in a positive way, includes specific environmental goals. There are no indicators or monitoring procedures outlined in the SPD. Selection criteria include environmental objectives.
CONSULTATION	County Administrative Boards (CABS) have responsibility at county level, and they are also represented in the Programme Management Committee.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	Refers to a number of directives and rules and underlines the need for compliance with European Union legislation and major policy initiatives.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	Environment treated as specific objective. Economic potential of environment acknowledged. Project monitoring weak, no specific monitoring procedure outlined. Environment not a large issue in terms of Structural Fund management.

Table XII -UK - Industrial South Wales

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: INDUSTRIAL SOUTH WALES	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains a basic environmental profile with an outline of assets and threats. No data or illustrations.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	13.1%
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The SPD sets out the expected impact of the programme and a commitment to general monitoring. At project level, criteria include environmental impact where relevant.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	There is a global statement on revitalising and regenerating the economy and the environment. Impact targets are outlined for each measure. The SPD sets out the provision for ongoing monitoring and interim evaluation.
CONSULTATION	The SPD mentions partnership and consultation with experts but there is no detail of the procedure.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	General statement of compliance with European Union policy and some individual national and European regulations are cited.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	There is good integration of environmental concerns into the strategy. However, there is a recognised need for more involvement of the Environment Agency and better monitoring procedures.

Table XIII - UK - Strathclyde

SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT: STRATHCLYDE	
<i>THEME</i>	<i>ASSESSMENT</i>
STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT	The SPD contains an environmental profile with an appraisal of past and expected impacts. It also includes comprehensive data and illustrations.
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPENDITURE	N/A
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	The programme impact is set out in the environmental profile. Environmental impact is included in project selection. There is also an indication of projects likely to gain support.
ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN	Environment protection is seen as adjunct to economic development. Environmental concerns are included in appraisal criteria. The SPD is weak on indicators. Monitoring is undertaken by the programme management team. There is also provision for interim evaluation as well as ex-post evaluation.
CONSULTATION	No details of the consultation procedures are included. The SPD mentions the <i>partnership</i> and the need for the advisory committees to include representatives of the relevant environment agencies.
EU ENVIRONMENTAL RULES	The SPD underlines the issues raised in the 5 th Environmental Action Programme and includes a standard compliance clause with European Union regulations.
RELATIVE STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES	There is good integration of environmental concerns into the strategy. However, the SPD could have included more information on indicators and on consultation procedures.