

IMPERIA

- Develops framework, criteria and tools to support the systematic and transparent impact significance assessment.
- Suggests new procedure for stakeholder involvement in the scoping phase.
- Creates inquiry templates suitable for some types of EIA which will be attached to the Internet based inquiry service developed by the Finland's Ministry of Environment.
- Produces guidelines and practical examples of good practices and methods in the impact assessment and the evaluation of alternatives.
- Promotes the use of Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis in the EIA and SEA processes.



IMPERIA improves the potential for implementation of systematic, understandable and cost-effective EIA and SEA as well as develops the methods to support the participation of public and stakeholder groups.

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Finnish Environment Institute SYKE is responsible for the IMPERIA project together with University of Oulu / Thule-institute, University of Jyväskylä, Ramboll Finland Ltd, SITO Ltd.

The budget of IMPERIA is 1.3 million euros, of which European Union finances 50 %. In addition, Finland's Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as well as the partner organizations finance the project.



Further information at IMPERIA website:
imperia.jyu.fi/english



Improving environmental assessment by adopting good practices and tools of Multi-criteria decision analysis



The aim of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to ensure that the significant impacts of the projects, plans and policies are recognized and assessed before their implementation. Stakeholder involvement and public participation are also essential in the identification and evaluation of the possible impacts.

The IMPERIA project aims to identify and develop good practices as well as methods to be used in the different stages of the EIA and SEA procedures. The ultimate aim is to improve the quality and effectiveness of EIA and SEA. The project is coordinated by Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) and partially financed by EU. Its duration is 3.5 years and it continues until the end of 2015.

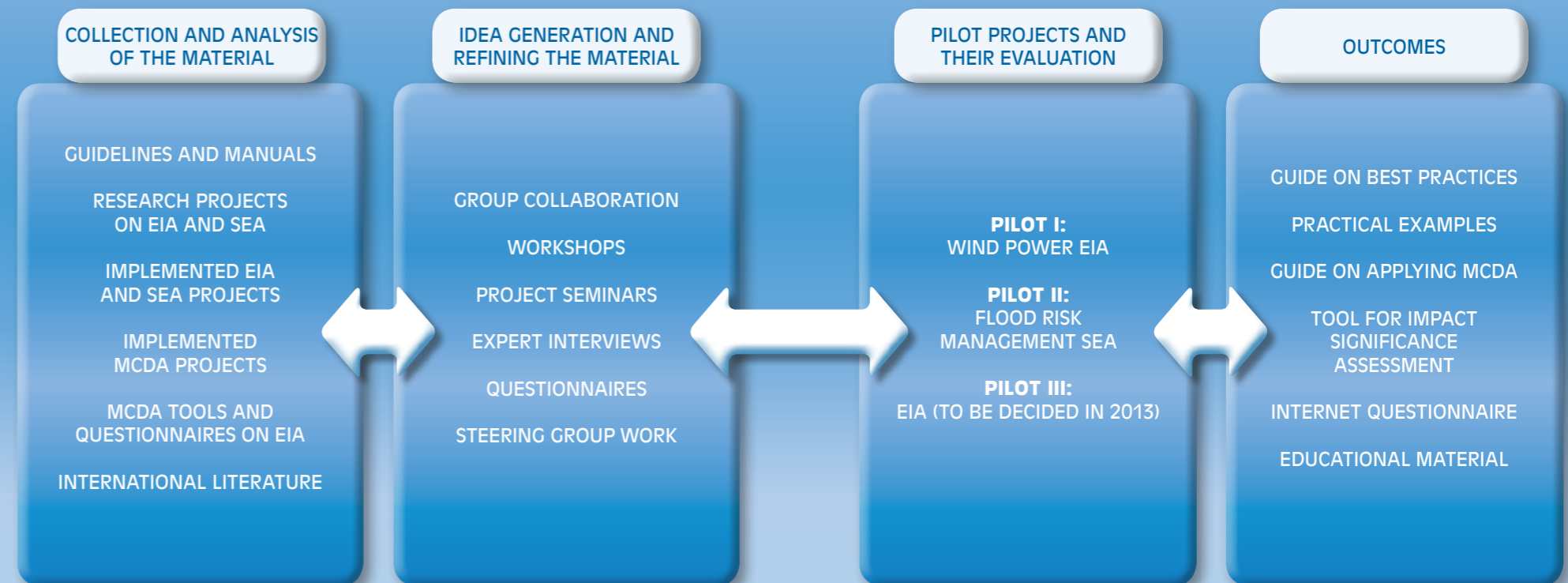
The results produced by the IMPERIA are directed to the developers of the projects, environmental consultants, authorities, media and educational organizations. People working at the field of EIA and SEA will be educated in the use of the new methods and tools and they are encouraged to adopt good practices. Material produced by the project will be stored and kept available in Finnish EIA portal YVAKO (<http://yvako.jyu.fi>).

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Phases of the project IMPERIA



New views and methods for impact assessments

Good practices are identified by carrying out literature review on both Finnish literature, including documents of completed EIA and SEA processes, and international scientific papers. In addition, there will be experts' and authorities' interviews and workshops. The results are used as grounds for developing applicable guidelines, methods and tools, which will be tested and further refined in different EIA and SEA processes.

The impact significance assessment is an essential part of EIA and SEA processes, though yet not well understood or properly guided. IMPERIA creates a systematic approach and tool for impact significance assessment, documenting the results as well as comparing the views of experts, stakeholders and public.

New ideas for participation

IMPERIA focuses on the use and applications of tools and practices developed in the field of multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA). These methods can be used to structure and present the information related to impacts systematically and transparently. At best, these approaches may create new insights to environmental impact assessment.

The participation of citizens and other interested parties play a key role in EIA and SEA processes. IMPERIA emphasizes early participation in order to build trust and to improve communication and collaboration between different parties. An Internet-based questionnaire tool is developed to facilitate the participation of public and stakeholders during assessment process.

Methods are demonstrated in three pilot projects

The first pilot project is the EIA of a large wind power project in the regions of North Ostrobothnia, North Savo and Kainuu. This pilot project is realized in a close co-operation with the developer Metsähallitus and the environmental consultant Pöyry Finland Ltd. The second pilot project is related to the SEA of flood risk management project. The last pilot project will be selected during the year 2013.