



# **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to the London's Sub- Regional Development Frameworks**

Summary

December 2005

## **RESULTS FROM THE IIA OF THE SRDFs**

*The individual; assessment reports for each of the SRDFs are presented in Annex B of this report.*

*In terms of the Appraisal Framework the SRDFs were generally strong on:*

- *Promoting the principles of sustainable development*
- *Promoting key sustainable development issues from the London Plan*
- *Access*
- *Ownership*
- *Creativity*

*These strengths relate on the one hand to the close relationship of the SRDFs to the SD principles and aspirations set out in the London Plan and on the other to the key deliverables of SRDFs in terms of development land, housing and transport infrastructure as well as to a lesser extent social and health infrastructure.*

*The SRDFs were generally weak on:*

- *Deprivation*
- *Social Exclusion*
- *Resource Management*
- *Links with other regions/sub-regions*

*In general the SRDFs made only passing reference to issues of deprivation and the need to engage in development that would be likely to benefit the most deprived groups in each sub-region. Little or no use was made of IMD data and characterisation of the development needs of deprived groups and the spatial expression of deprivation within each sub-region was generally very poorly presented in the SRDFs.*

*One of the overarching concerns that has arisen from the assessment of the SRDFs is the lack of a focus on 'people'. This extends to existing residents and their needs as well as the characteristics of the new population and the spatial issues raised by the size and characteristics of that new population.*

*The issue of resource management which effectively covers much of the environmental component of SD was quite poorly developed in the SRDFs even where, as would be the case with for example waste management, there are direct relationships between sub-regional economies, competitiveness and resource efficiency. Whilst each SRDF has a section of the text that deals in broad terms with environmental issues and the environmental baseline this information was generally not well integrated into the rest of the document.*

*The London Plan and the SRDFs in theory have links with the spatial strategies and other plans of surrounding regions, in particular the South East and the East of England. In general, there was little or no recognition of these other plans and their relationships to the SRDF. In the case of issues such as housing, transport infrastructure and community plans there may be significant implications for SD.*

## **KEY LESSONS LEARNT**

*From this phase of the IIA project it is possible to identify a small number of key lessons that should be incorporated into any further development or applications of the methodology. These can be summarised as follows.*

- ***Engagement with plan authors is vital***

*The ability to interact with plan or strategy authors in an interactive process is fundamental to the value of the SD outcomes. During the pilot project the relationship between the GLA planners and the assessment team was strong and allowed for extremely useful exchanges of ideas and information.*

*Early engagement is particularly important since, at least for formal assessment processes, it will be necessary to discuss appraisal objectives and questions, identify concrete options or alternatives to be appraised and discuss the relevant evidence base and policy context. Retrospective assessment is always very obvious and is not compliant with SA/SEA requirements. It is important that both teams can document the influence of the assessment on the plan or strategy.*

*The authors of plans and strategies should be involved in assessments from the very start and the same holds true for the engagement of assessment teams with plan and strategy processes.*

- ***Stakeholder Inputs***

*The involvement of stakeholders in this pilot project has been enormously valuable to the IIA methodology and process. Clearly there are strict legal requirements governing the involvement of stakeholders in SEA but it is useful to go beyond these requirements and involve a wide range of SD stakeholders at key stages in the process.*

- ***Influence of Assessment on the Plan Process***

*We have already indicated that interaction with the planners has been a vital component of the pilot project. It is also very important that the influences of the assessment on the plan can be demonstrated (especially for the SEA Directive). This is best managed via a detailed record of the interaction between the development of the plan and the delivery of outputs from the assessment. In a formal assessment process it is necessary to create this 'audit trail' from the start of the process to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive.*

*An audit trail of this type would have greatly facilitated the final assessment of the SRDFs.*

- ***Tailoring of Appraisal Questions***

*It is important that the detailed questions in the appraisal framework reflect the focus of the plan or strategy being assessed. This will require detailed joint working by the plan authors and the assessment team so that it is clear on what basis and from what perspective the assessment is being carried out.*

*This project has also benefited from the inputs of a wide range of stakeholders into the development of the Appraisal Framework and of appraisal questions including their detailed wording.*

- ***People and Environment Aspects of Planning***

*From the pilot project it has been quite clear that the sustainable development aspects of spatial planning are not necessarily common ground between planners and sustainable development specialists. This simply reinforces the need for close working on assessments to create a common understanding of the planning and SD issues. This understanding should not be taken for granted. This is equally true for health issues.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Based on the experience gained in implementing the pilot project we would make the following recommendations:*

- 1. that future integrated assessments processes build-in time to allow the planning/strategy team and the assessment team to work together in an interactive fashion.*
- 2. that the name Integrated Impact Assessment is dropped, it is not helpful.*
- 3. that the methodology is summarised in an accessible form that clearly demonstrates its compliance with SA/SEA requirements but also its added value in terms of the integration of health issues.*
- 4. that the methodology is not seen as a replacement for HIA but that they continue to co-exist. IIA has demonstrated how health issues can be integrated into Strategic processes. HIA is still invaluable at project level.*
- 5. that more research is carried out to identify mechanisms that facilitate the collection and analysis of health data.*
- 6. that EQIA is incorporated into future assessments.*
- 7. that the GLA/LSDC/LHC produce guidance on how IIA can effectively integrate health issues for dissemination to partners in London.*

## **CONCLUSIONS**

*The pilot IIA project has contributed to the testing of the IIA methodology. It has been demonstrated that it can effectively meet the requirements of SA/SEA and is, indeed, more likely to assess sustainable development issues effectively than just SEA.*

*The IIA approach should be adopted for the assessment of regional and sub-regional strategies where SA/SEA is required by law or will represent best practice in terms of addressing sustainable development. It will not replace project level HIA or EIA but will allow the effective integration of health issues at the strategic level.*

*IIA also offers scope for the integration of Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) into SA/SEA and this should be actively considered in any future Integrated impact Assessment.*