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## **The JRC launches the Impact Assessment tools "IA TOOLS" website to the public**

The Joint Research Centre has opened the Impact Assessment tools website, IA TOOLS, to the public. This online platform provides policy actors and impact assessment practitioners throughout Europe with a repository of guidance, information and best practices for impact assessment of new policies and legislative measures.

IA TOOLS was developed for internal use by the European Commission following the approach and structure of the Impact Assessment Guidelines. It supports desk officers in producing high quality Impact Assessments. Experience has shown that IA TOOLS can provide added value to impact assessment practitioners in the Member States and in other organisations and in response to frequent request from consultants and experts outside the Commission. Consequently the website has now been opened to the public.

The IA TOOLS website provides experts and non-experts with guidance on the main steps to be followed to perform an impact assessment. It contains an inventory of social, economic and environmental impact indicators. It also offers a comprehensive picture of the qualitative and quantitative tools available for the analysis of policy impact and access to up-to-date databases.

Since 2005, major initiatives included in the Commission's Annual Legislative and Work Programme –are subject to impact assessment. This is performed by addressing several questions: what the issue is, what are the objectives to be pursued, what are the policy options, what are their possible impacts and how do policy options compare. In the end, Impact assessment ensures the balanced assessment of economic, environmental and social impacts of new policy proposals, helping to avoid unintended and unexpected side effects of new regulation and legislation.

IA TOOLS is structured in four sections:

- The impact inventory, which provides information of the impact areas and indicators (economic, environmental and social) as described in the European Commission IA guidelines. This section provides direct links into relevant data resources for the individual impact areas.
- The model inventory, which contains information on quantitative tools and models, helps the user determine whether the impacts of a certain policy proposal can be assessed and quantified using existing models.

- The good practice inventory, a collection of examples of impact assessments carried out since 2003, showing all stages of impact assessment, from description of the problem to stakeholder consultation.
- The IA TOOLS handbook, which describes, categorises and takes the user to impact assessment information and data bases available from the European Commission, research projects, Member States and international organisations.

### ***Background***

IA TOOLS has been developed along the lines of the European Commission's Impact Assessment Guidelines SEC (2005)791<sup>1</sup>, and corresponds with the information provided by the Commission's Secretariat General. It was initially developed within a research project of the 6<sup>th</sup> Community Research Framework Programme in which the JRC's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies participated.

### ***Further information***

For further information and feedback, please visit: <http://iatools.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

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<sup>1</sup> IMPACT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES, 15 June 2005 with March 2006 update.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/docs/key\\_docs/sec\\_2005\\_0791\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/docs/key_docs/sec_2005_0791_en.pdf)