

## IAIA Climate Change Section Status Report Summary

(For the Period September 2022 – May 2023)

The full 23-page **Climate Change Section Action Plan Status Report** for the previous period December 2021 – August 2022 was posted under **More Information** on the website for the **IAIA South Africa Special Symposium: Celsius 1.5: Impact Assessment and Climate Change** 26-28 Sept22 in Cape Town, South Africa and on IAIA Connect.

Background on IAIA's Climate Change Position Statement and key elements of IAIA Climate Change and IA Action Plan can be found on IAIA's website under Hot Topics <https://iaia.org/hot-topics.php>. The Position Statement and Action Plan provide the rationale for the selection and prioritization of actions under the Plan. We would like to encourage members to lead or actively support the key actions in the Plan, or propose new initiatives. We are particularly interested in how we might secure philanthropic support or sponsorship for Plan implementation, as IAIA staff have only limited resources to back up our voluntary member driven efforts. The effectiveness of the Action Plan depends on your active engagement and support! Please send your ideas, comments and ideas for new initiatives to: Wes Fisher [weston2.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:weston2.fisher@gmail.com) and Arend Kolhoff [akolhoff@eia.nl](mailto:akolhoff@eia.nl) as Co-chairs of IAIA's Climate Change Section.

- **Virtual Theme Forum Think Big - A Cleaner Greener COVID-19 Recovery** This was an effort through the Climate Change Section and the COVID Task Force to design a virtual forum that links COVID-19 and Climate Change together as symptoms of stress on the biosphere and scientific findings on planetary boundaries crossed for species declines and loss of biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, disruption of the nitrogen/phosphorus cycle from worldwide agricultural practices and Greenhouse Gas emissions. See [https://thinkbig.iaia.org/index.php?\\_zs=MsD3b&\\_zl=Vp1p2](https://thinkbig.iaia.org/index.php?_zs=MsD3b&_zl=Vp1p2)
- **IAIA '23 Kuching Annual Roundtable on IA and Climate Change (Session 114) "Status of IAIA's Climate Action Plan and Next Steps"** will focus on summarizing actions to date by the Climate Section Co-Chairs and those Technical Advisory Panel (TEC) coordinators/chairs who are present in Kuching. It also provided additional opportunities for participant input on next steps and priorities.

**COP27 Engagement.** The Section's involvement has been limited. Huyam Ahmed from Khartoum was in attendance and Bryony Walmsley participated but only virtually, with a presentation on the 15th at a USAID-organised panel session in the Climate Justice Pavilion.

**Collaboration with IAIA South Africa on the Special Symposium: Celsius 1.5: Impact Assessment and Climate Change.** The Climate Change Section assisted IAIA South Africa (IAIAsa) with organization of their successful Special Symposium - Celsius 1.5: Impact Assessment and Climate Change, held 26-28 September 2022 in Cape Town. The symposium highlighted key elements of IAIA's Climate Change Action Plan, especially related climate change impacts on cities and urban settlements as well as links to planetary boundary environmental and social issues. Two members of the Climate Change Section were on the Programme Committee: Cochair of the Climate Change Section, Wes Fisher, and Ahmed Sanda who is President of Nigeria's IAIA affiliate, Association for Environmental Impact Assessment of Nigeria. Ahmed is also Chair of the Climate Change Action Plan TEC Engage with Decision makers and Urban Planners.

### IAIA Climate Change Action Plan Implementation

- **Liaison with Institutional Investors, the Reinsurance/Insurance Industry and Risk Analysts.** Jiří Dusík (Integra Consulting) assumed the role of Co-chair. New sustainable finance frameworks are being developed which provide criteria for determining what constitutes 'sustainable investment' or 'sustainable economic activity.' These are known as taxonomies for sustainable investments, and they have the potential to radically change the environmental outcomes of decision making, based on a 'significant contribution' and 'do no significant harm' approach to critical environmental (and social) components. **In March '22, IAIA held a webinar entitled EU Taxonomy of Sustainable Activities: Implications of IA Systems.** This free webinar is available for viewing on the IAIA website at <https://www.iaia.org/webinar-details.php?ID=50> Alan Bond (University of East Anglia) and Jiří Dusík (Integra Consulting) provide keynote presentations summarizing their recent IAPA paper on the topic, followed by an expert panel. Strong financial taxonomy criteria could be critically important to better address the environmental sustainability priorities of the 21st century.

**IAIA'23 Kuching, Malaysia 8-11 May 2023: Resilience through impact assessment and leadership Proposed Training Course on Sustainable finance and IA systems: synergies and interlinkages** Under this Action Plan Task Area, a 2-day course has been accepted for up to 30- 40 paying participants with openings for 4 students (course fee waived), with no prerequisites. Course Summary The course will be given by the International Sustainable Finance Centre (ISFC) (<https://www.isfc.org/>) and Integra Consulting (<https://www.integracons.com/>). The course covers environmental, social and governance (ESG) concept and its use, the rise of taxonomies of sustainable economic activities, as well as the latest developments in the global development and standardisation of sustainability reporting and disclosure standards. The course also looks at how the financial industry is trying to measure and account for impact. Goals and learning outcomes include:

- Analytical approaches used by major ESG rating providers: MSCI ESG Ratings, Sustainalytics' ESG Risk Ratings, S&P Global ESG Scores, Moody's ESG Solutions and Bloomberg ESG Disclosures Scores.

- Evolving sustainability reporting frameworks developed with the aim to provide input data to ESG ratings: e.g., Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB), the draft EU Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), proposals generated by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), etc.
- Comprehension of the different sustainable finance taxonomies.
- Understanding of the relevance of impact assessment to the developments in ESG data and reporting.
- Full grasp of how ESG is used by companies and financial institutions, and how this practice is evolving – and what demands it might bring.
- Understanding of key challenges and future trends for ESG and impact investing practices for the coming years.

The instructors are: Linda Zeilina, CEO, International Sustainable Finance Centre (ISFC), (Czechia) Julian Toth, COO, International Sustainable Finance Centre (ISFC), and Jiří Dusík (Integra Consulting, Ltd., (Czechia)

## DOUBLE MATERIALITY IN ESG DATA AND REPORTING: HOW TO CLEAN UP THE ESG MESS

ABSTRACT ID# **259**

Presenting Author: **Linda Zeilina**

Preferred Session: **Sustainable Finance and ESG - double materiality assessment**

Summary Statement: **This intervention will focus on double materiality implementation, and what practices will change due to EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and Taxonomy regulation.**

## LINKAGES BETWEEN THE EU TAXONOMY AND CURRENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

ABSTRACT ID# **302**

Presenting Author: **Jiří Dusík**

Preferred Session: **Sustainable Finance and ESG - double materiality assessment**

Summary Statement: **The paper will examine interlinkages between the EU Taxonomy and current impact assessment regimes and opportunities for their potential coordination.**

**IAIA endorsement and participation in the Croatia Sep 14th -17th 2022 European and Regional Conference – Environmental Assessments and the European Green Deal '22 organized by the Croatian Association of Experts in Nature and Environmental Protection** Jiří Dusík (Integra Consulting) and Alan Bond (University of East Anglia) moderated and presented at the Conference, and Andreea Nita of the Engage with Decision-makers and Urban Planners TEC presented as well. See the full program at [https://huszpo--konferencijacom.translate.goog/en/?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=hr&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://huszpo--konferencijacom.translate.goog/en/?_x_tr_sl=hr&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc)

- **Liaison with Environmental Law Organizations.** Stacey Fineran of Ohio State University is the Chair of this TEC. Impact Assessment Agency of Canada Policy Dialogue Grant: The Advance IA Processes and Climate Change Law Initiative

An IAIA grant was obtained for \$54,609.06 CAD/\$44,000.00 USD from the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. The proposal was written and is managed by Stacey. The grant supports formal creation of a technical advisory panel (TEC) composed of respected IA technical and legal professionals. Findings and recommendations are addressed to decision-makers and the public with input from the financial community and industry in pursuit of 2050 carbon targets. This effort draws upon initiatives to reverse broader deterioration of natural earth systems. The duration of the grant is one year, commencing January 2022, but it has been extended until June 2023.

The information gathering activities involved two steps: – first, a core research panel (Grant Wilson, of the Earth Law Center <https://www.earthlawcenter.org/> with ELC students/colleagues, Stacey Fineran, and Andreea Nita, followed by an expanded TEC review panel for the summer of 2023.

Having decided to focus on first identifying model (IA) legal and regulatory procedures and institutional arrangements that appear best suited to help achieve the Paris Climate Agreement targets for climate change mitigation, two strategies were followed:

- (1) to participate in and gather information from IAIA-related events (e.g., webinars, conferences, symposia) as a means of liaising with and learning from environmental legal professionals and IA specialists to identify any model legislation, regulations, or institutional arrangements for climate change mitigation and safeguarding the Earth's biosphere; and
- (2) to develop and apply a global survey instrument to identify model legal procedures from IA practitioners. The survey also asked questions about IAIA members' perspectives on the importance of existing methods of IA practice to achieve the Paris Climate Agreement targets as well as their perspectives on the relevance of global and local carrying capacity issues for IA practice. Several other related issues were assessed via the survey instrument. A summary of the survey results, as they relate to identifying model legal procedures, is presented in Section 4.0 of the report.

### Recommendations for Next Steps

The European Green Deal and the EU Taxonomy have been identified as model legal procedures and it is recommended that they receive priority focus in an IAIA Virtual Forum in 2023/2024.

It is recommended that the Climate Change Law for the State of New York also be subject of an IAIA Virtual Forum in 2023/2024.

A third IAIA Virtual Law Forum is also recommended under the heading - How do we strengthen legal safeguards to assess and address long-term cumulative impacts on earth and human systems? The Forum would explore the potential for establishing legal safeguards to ensure that global footprint overshoot issues are addressed with management plan alternatives for long-term 'strong' sustainability. It would also consider how this might be achieved at the global and local level?

- **Engage with Journalists.** IAIA Staff Bridget John and Jack Marsden have responsibility for this Action. o Grew our international press list by 40 journalists, bringing us to a total from 200 to over 306 journalists and editors w/ contact info o Invited 34 journalists to attend IAIA22 o Conducted outreach to various Indigenous news media and established relationships with communications professionals from Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), Indian Country Today, and NDN Network o Worked with the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada to disseminate IAIA22 news releases to their press contacts o Included environmental journalists in our targeted audience for paid social media ads o News releases relating to the virtual symposium and to IAIA22 were disseminated through Environmental XPRT, a subscriber-based international newsletter for those in various environmental industries. o Plans are being made to reinvigorate our work with The Society for Environmental Journalists (SEJ) and renew our presence at their conference.
- **Engage with Decision-making Authorities and Urban Planners.** This Technical Advisory Group (TEC) is led by Ahmed Sanda, Past President of IAIA's Nigeria Affiliate, the Association for Environmental Impact Assessment of Nigeria <https://aeian.org/>. There are around 20 active members in the group. The TEC is exploring potential collaboration with Cities Alliance. One topic of discussion is how the TEC might assist in implementing the Cities Alliance study "No One Worse Off? The Role of Environmental and Social Safeguards for Resilient Infrastructure Projects in Cities" for which Bryony Walmsley was primary author. See <https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/events/launch-no-one-worse-safeguards-infrastructure> and the study report, findings and recommendations at <https://www.citiesalliance.org/resources/publications/cities-allianceknowledge/report-no-one-worse-safeguards-infrastructure>.: We explained that our reason for wishing to collaborate driven by a sense of professional and ethical responsibility that the effective application of IA processes in addressing climate change and other global and local carrying capacity issues is vital to identifying strong sustainability criteria in urban and regional planning and mitigation and adaptation strategies. Specifically, we wanted to address the two primary recommendations from the CA Report: Improved application of SEA in urban planning and improved follow up and quality control and how we might support CA in implementing the report recommendations. The TEC is also exploring potential voluntary support to CA initiatives in applying IA processes in development of City Development Strategies for the following two actions: Action 1. Addressing Climate Change and Poverty in Urban Areas – Strengthening Model Programmes in Ghana This form of collaboration may be a good way for the TEC to initiate on-the-ground collaboration with CA, as Ghana's EPA and IAIA affiliate has been engaged for years in advancing IA practice and improving IAIA processes. Two of IAIA's Past Presidents have professional backgrounds in impact assessment processes under the Ghana EPA, Yaw Osei and Jonathan Allotey. Ebenezer Appah-Sampong Ghana EPA's current Deputy Executive Director and President of IAIA Ghana. Action 2. Options to provide pro bono capacity development assistance to Urban Planners through CA and IAIA Collaboration in a workshop on The Role of Strategic Environmental Assessment in Addressing Climate Change, Informality and Infrastructure in Urban Planning This course was presented September 26, 2022 in conjunction with the Celsius 1.5: Impact Assessment and Climate Change symposium. Bryony Walmsley, as a member of the TEC, offered the workshop, which was in person only. For details see the website <https://conferences.iaia.org/climatechange22/workshop.php> Ahmed Sanda's firm Ashawa Consults Limited was the workshop sponsor with a \$5000 contribution.

**IAIA Virtual Theme Forum: Meeting Urban Planners' needs in Strategic Planning in response to Climate Change and other Global Impacts** This new initiative was recently proposed to the TEC (August 15, 2022). Garry Middle has graciously agreed to serve as the coordinator (see a short bio on him below). Under discussion with the TEC and Bridget John (in her role as Acting IAIA Executive Director) is preparation of a virtual theme forum series of 6 sessions that would consist of 15-20 minute pre-recorded presentations grouped into "panel" sessions. Each session would be on topics/issues of interest to both IA practitioners and Urban and Regional planners and decision-makers working on climate change impacts, and other global impacts affecting urban areas. The six pre-recorded virtual "panel" sessions would then be followed by one live-streamed Q&A workshop. This virtual forum would be similar to other IAIA Webinars and posted on the IAIA website and IAIA Channel (You Tube) for long-term free access. See for example the IAIA Series: Think Big <https://thinkbig.iaia.org/index.php> from Nov. 21, 2021. The Theme Forum will be open to both IAIA members and non-members and the public with no registration fees. FYI Garry Middle is Director of VisionEnvironment consulting in Western Australia <http://www.garrymiddle.net/>. and is an environmental planner with over 30 years of experience in the field

- **Outline additional steps IAIA should take to promote IA and climate change mitigation and adaptation best practices, including the use of traditional knowledge systems and local community experience.**

**Guidance on SEA supporting transition towards renewable energy** Arend Kolhoff of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) and Co-chair of the Climate Change Section developed a comprehensive project plan and budget to inform funding agencies about the initiative (with review and support from IAIA Executive Director David Bancroft). This initiative was subsequently discussed with: Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, IUCN, Secretariat of UNECE, The International Hydropower Association, The European Investment Bank and The World Bank. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has subsequently provided seed money to further develop the project plan and support the presentation of this initiative at IAIA2022. The World Bank has shown interest in developing this guidance in their East Southern Africa support programme focusing on the strengthening of IA country systems in 25 countries. o Miles Scott-Brown of Ciera Group and Barry Dalal-Clayton of Environment and Development Services Ltd will be assisting IAIA in developing SEA guidance for the renewable sector, and they are requesting member assistance. Complete information is provided at <https://iaia.org/news-details.php?ID=172>. If you are willing to volunteer and can help with these tasks, please contact both Barry Dalal-Clayton and Miles Scott-Brown as soon as possible. Miles had a Special Session at IAIA'22 in Vancouver to explain the initiative and see member engagement and support. A hard copy brief on the initiative was provided to all delegates together with their hard copy programs at IAIA South Africa's (IAIAsa) successful Special Symposium - Celsius 1.5: Impact Assessment and Climate Change, held 26-28 September 2022 in Cape Town.

**Translation into Arabic of "Climate Change in Impact Assessment: International Best Practice Principles" (2018) and the FasTips: "Climate Smart Decisions (2013)"** Translation was by Climate Change Section members Grace Rachid from Lebanon and Huyam Ahmed from Khartoum with assistance from Phil Byer who lives in White Rock, British Columbia, just outside Vancouver. Urvassi Hurburun of EnAq Consulting in Durban will also be helping with further best practice activities.

- **Work with the IAIA Board to suggest an approach to auditing IAIA's own GHG footprint with proposed mitigation/offset strategies.** IAIA staff responsibility. Bridget John and Kayla Deitch IAIA staff continues to explore the best options for this action. In summary, there are three proposals/questions for the Climate Change section to review.

1. Should we move forward to partner with Carbon Fund to fulfill our office carbon offset emissions donation? (We would need a decision on this by early November in order to implement this for 2022.)

2. Should we propose to increase the \$5 donation per registrant to \$10 for annual conferences? (If approved, this would go into effect for IAIA24.) 3. Do we continue to provide a local donation based for carbon offsets for events, OR do we use a suggested program through one of our partner organizations (Carbon Fund, Terrapass, etc.)? (This decision would affect IAIA24. The IAIA23 team has already begun looking for a local recipient organization.) As per the plan, input from the Climate Change Section is needed. This process would begin by re-examining IAIA past guidance on greening our conferences as our starting point, and especially whether the USD \$5 offset fee assessed for each conference attendee is sufficient. In addition, IAIA staff had already planned to evaluate the online calculator used to calculate the carbon offset contribution it makes each year to cover office operations and staff and board travel. IAIA staff will identify a number of free software tools to assist small businesses in calculating their carbon footprint.

The CEO will make recommendations to the Board regarding mitigation and offsets. In addition, the output of the audit may become a regular part of the IAIA dashboard on organizational performance to be reported both to the Board and CCS. Proposal from IAIA HQ to be reviewed by IAIA's Climate Change Section: As part of the Climate Change Action Plan, we need to re-evaluate what we are doing for carbon offsets for IAIA offices and annual conferences. We have done some initial research and are prepared to present our recommendation based on the following information. This includes deciding on the way forward for: 1) IAIA office emissions and 2) IAIA annual conference emissions. First of all, we would like to propose becoming a partner of Carbon Fund to fulfill our office offsets. We would pay a yearly fee (\$700+), get to choose a specific project to donate to, and we would be able to use their logo to show our partnership support.

We would not be required to specifically calculate the offsets this way; they suggest the partnership amount based on their estimation of our business size (6-10 employees), as they have already conducted a generous estimate of several

offices of this size. Considering that IAIA has made a donation of \$360-\$410 for the past several years, we feel this partnership amount will have a larger impact than past efforts.

- **Obtain Arctic Council Observer Status.** No new Observers were admitted to the Arctic Council in 2021. This may be because Russia took over the Chair for the year. We are now considering how to support the Council without being an Observer. Norway is next in line to assume the chairmanship. On reflection we think that IAIA's contribution could be more valuable supporting planning and scenario work with an Arctic research entity by helping them apply IA processes to long term planning or scenario building activities, rather than making another try for Observer status.

It appears the Council already may have too many institutions as Observers, with not much benefit to their work. Four possible organizations were identified where IAIA collaboration might fit with their technical needs and research staff. We are beginning some informal exploratory contact with a few of the technical researchers and fellows who we think might have an interest in SEA and Cumulative Effects Assessment related to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as other Arctic carry capacity issues. From Paul Sage's initial research and our preliminary review, it may be that the Polar Institute under the Wilson Center and the Arctic Institute have research needs that would benefit most from an IAIA liaison. There also appear to be opportunities to participate through collaboration with the U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (The IARPC). See <https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/index.html>

Opportunities may exist for IAIA (perhaps with a collaborator) to potentially support the 2022-26 plan. See <https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/arp-2022-2026-implementation.html>. A question for us, is where we might best be supportive? For the past quarter-century, the Arctic has been a unique zone of cooperation among the eight countries of the high north: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States. - The goal of the Arctic Council is to foster collaboration in areas such as scientific research; development of and execution of projects; search and rescue operations that help to meet the challenges posed by climate change to the Arctic states and the indigenous peoples living in the Arctic.

The 25 years of successful collaboration was put on hold shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. One week after the start of the war, seven of the eight Arctic Council members announced that they would "pause their work" with the organization until the end of Russia's status as the Council's Chairman in 2023 when Norway will assume the Chairmanship. We are now waiting until the Council resumes its activities under Norway's leadership to see if we should once again pursue an Observer status or, perhaps work directly with the Council's project-oriented working groups. - In the meantime, we are thinking about how IAIA's contribution could be valuable supporting the planning and scenario work of other Arctic organizations.

So far, largely via website, we have preliminarily identified four organizations that we need to know more about to determine if there is a fit between them and IAIA. - Our next step is to look further into these organizations research staffs and their projects to determine if appears that there are areas of mutual interest. If does seem to be the case, then we will try to establish informal communication through e-mail and video calls. - So far from our preliminary searches and initial reviews, it appears that the Polar Institute and Arctic Institute, may be a good fit to IAIA's capabilities and interests. Both organizations are part of the Wilson Center in Washington, DC. - Paul Sage is currently exploring these potentials on behalf of IAIA's Climate Change Section. Paul also recently identified another organization that also appears to have mutual interests: U.S. Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC). - While we wait to see what the Arctic Council decides to do when its "pause" is over, we continue identify new partners for IAIA that would increase our reach Page 23 of 23 and involvement internationally. Once know how the Arctic Council is going to proceed and we have completed our explorations, we will bring our results back to the Climate Change Section and from there to IAIA's Board for their review.

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**Part 2. Briefly describe any current or future plans for the Section (those that are on-going now or may start up in the next year). Seek additional outside financial sponsorship for implementation (and member technical support) for the following Action Plan priorities:**

- Under the **TEC: Liaise with Institutional Investors, the Reinsurance/Insurance Industry and Risk Analysts** develop and advance additional collaboration on the use of Strategic Environmental and Social Impact Assessment in developing strong sustainability criteria and standards for sustainable taxonomies for financial institutions and corporations.
- Under the **TEC: Liaise with Environmental Law Organizations** advance the research initiative, prepare research results, technical expert review and outreach of IA member interdisciplinary expertise. Discuss developing a coalition to create international and national scientific institutions for global data collection on planetary boundary conditions to support Strategic E/SIA and the development of 'strong' sustainability criteria for financial institutions and corporations.
- Under the **TEC: Liaise with Decision-makers and Urban Planners**, move forward with prioritization and implementation of the Task List, potential collaboration with Cities Alliance, ICLEI, C40 cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, UN HABITAT, World Urban Forum and other urban and regional planning bodies addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation and other global impacts. Advance the proposed Virtual Theme Forum series and other similar Forums, webinars and events.
- Under the CC Action Plan – Item 4: SEA Guidance for Renewables. See the steps outlined by Barry Dalal-Clayton and Miles Scott-Brown as summarized above in greater detail at <https://iaia.org/news-details.php?ID=172>.

**Part 3. Submit any recommendations or proposals to the Board, and clearly indicate if there are any specific issues or recommendations that you would like feedback on from the Board,**

We continue to request attention to the e-mail sent to David Bancroft and the Board on Dec 14th, 2021 entitled Fwd: Request for the Board and staff to revisit recommendations from ARIA (Alliances to Renovate Impact Assessment) Ad Hoc Group Response to the IAIA 2022-2026 Draft Strategic Plan. We can resend them to the Board in a separate e-mail. We think some of our recommendations were addressed in the draft Strategic Plan, but we hope the new CEO position description takes into account some of the key recommendations as well as those from the COVID 19 Task Force.

Compiled by Wes Fisher