Selection and integration of environmental impacts in the Danish transport infrastructure assessment process

Transport projects have numerous consequences for the environment, society and economy, and thus an EU Directive has stated a number of impacts that need to be assessed prior to any major intervention. This paper is set in a Danish context where the EU requirements have been adopted in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulation along with national requirements. In recent years, however, the EIAs have been criticised for an inconsistent inclusion of impacts and unclear assessment process. A selection of EIAs is for this reason reviewed and compared to the EU Directive and corresponding works in Sweden and the UK to identify potential opportunities for improvements. From the literature study, an overview table with all potential relevant impacts for transport projects is set up to assist the EIA process. For the sake of simplicity and transparency, the impacts selected from this table should, however, be further reduced in number to ensure that only the most important impacts are included in the process. To further increase simplicity and transparency in the EIA process, a novel framework for assessing different types of impacts is proposed. In this framework, a comprehensive decision support tool involving stakeholders is in focus. The framework is supplemented with a procedure for generating objectives and presenting results in an appropriate way to the many stakeholders involved. The impacts overview table and the assessment techniques are applied to a case study to illustrate the process, and finally, conclusions and perspectives for future work within the field are set out.

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