

**EU Environmental Impact Assessment Directive -
challenges and perspectives in the light of the past
experiences and the recent proposal for amendment**

EIA as a tool for sustainability

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Opinions expressed in this presentation are the responsibility of the Author and do not necessarily match with the position of the Organizations he works for or cooperate with

The Question

- Almost 25 years of EIA experience have often shown (at least in my country) *inappropriate margins of technical discretion*, with undesirable impacts on *political discretion*.
- EIA faces serious difficulties to ensure coherence and effectiveness, in different decision-making context,
- Also public participation has been relatively ineffective, and the tendency is always to shorten the timing for the consultation process.
- There is evidence of an increasing number of cases brought in front of the Courts.

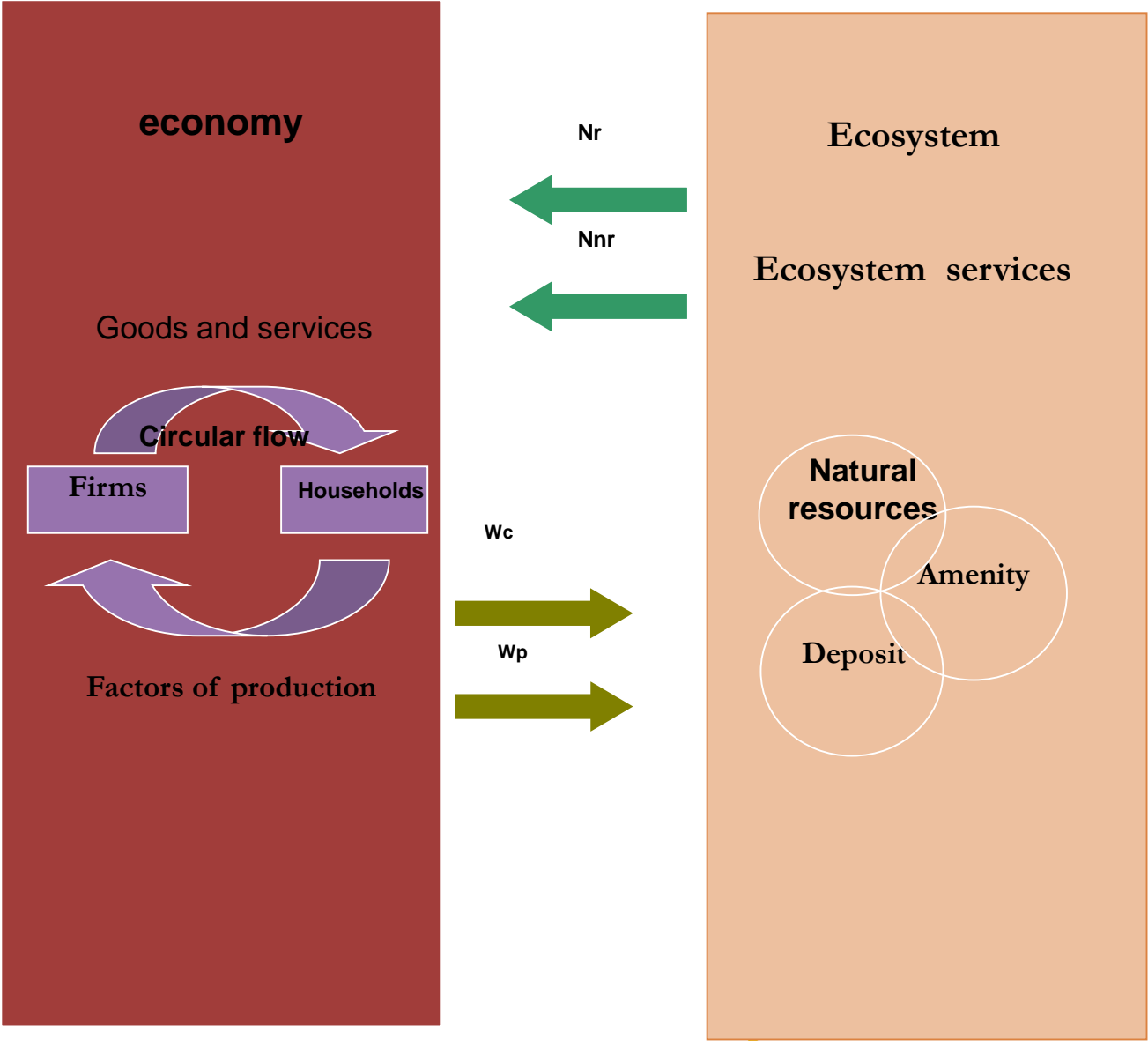
The Answer

- Is the proposed amended Directive a good answer?
- Is an effective tool for sustainability

Environmental assessment and the economy/env context

- The effectiveness of Environmental Assessment procedures is challenged by the context it works
- It largely depends on the predominant world vision
- As world vision here is intended how is perceived the relationship between economy and ecosystem.
- Conventional EIA reflect a preanalytic vision of the relationship between **economy** and **environment** where these are considered as two different sectors or possibly the environment as a part of the whole (economy)

The economic view (neo – classical)



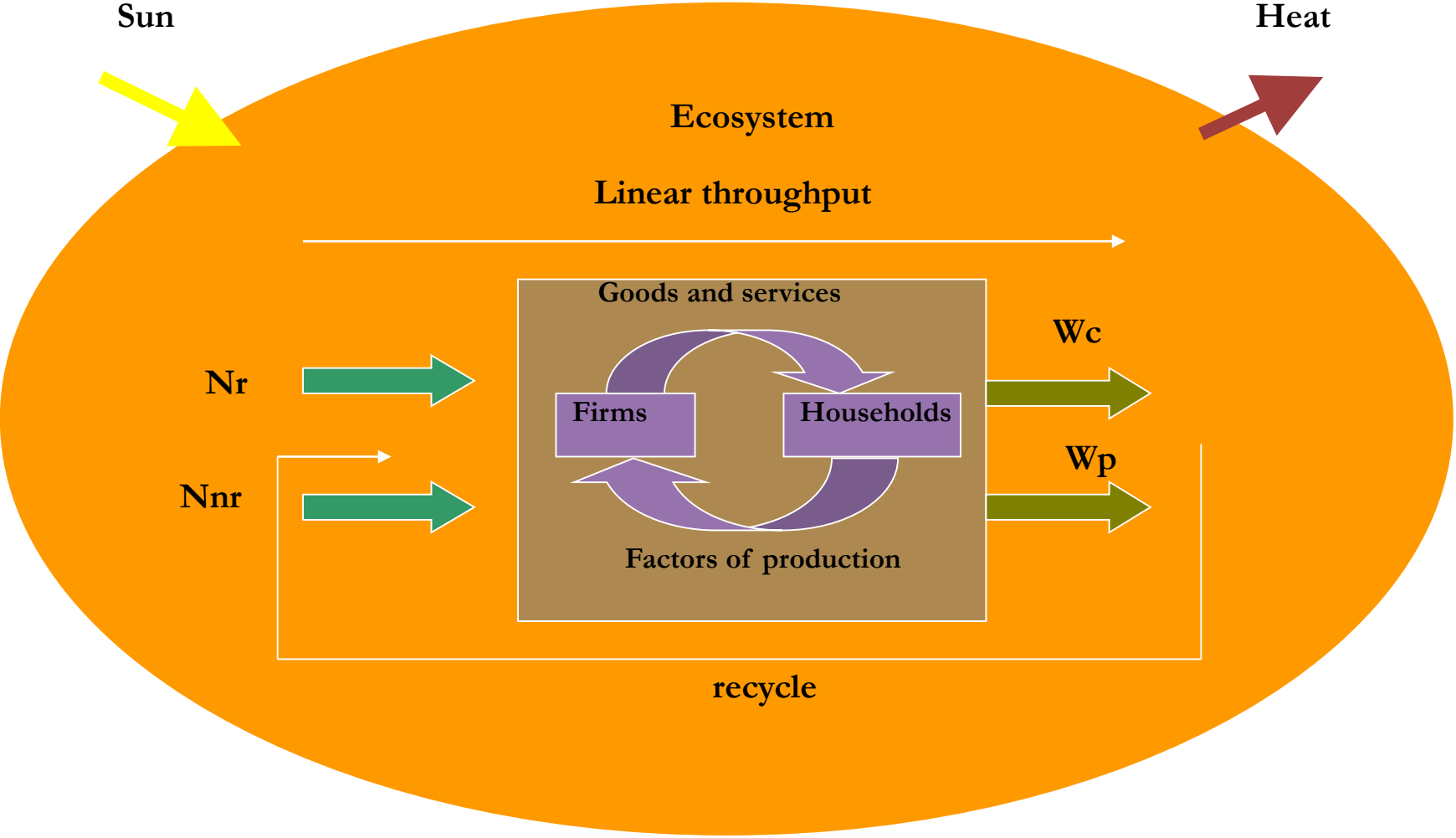
EA as tool for efficiency

- Internalisation in the market of environmental aspects is under two conditions:
 - a) it is possible to estimate the physical impacts of production on environmental quality and their consequences;
 - b) it is possible to estimate a monetary value of such changes.
- Environmental assessment, enabling public participation was conceived as a tool to increase the efficiency of the decision making process

Efficiency and sustainability?

- The relations between the environment and the other systems are characterized by an increasing complexity, where the economic, environmental, institutional and social systems are reciprocally influencing each other and where it is not always possible to determine with certainty their future evolution.
- Efficiency does not guarantee sustainability (scale and just distribution)
- The conventional EIA approach should be reconsidered at the light of a preanalytic vision where economy is a part of the whole (ecosystem)

The economic view (ecological economics)



Efficiency and scale

- Engaging with the concepts of scale and distribution leads us to focus on the need for a continuous improvement of the quality of life (development) as a legitimate aspiration of every human being.
- Growth refers to the quantity of goods and services produced and sold in the markets (central to mainstream economics), and must be constrained to maintain the life-supporting capacity of ecosystems, which benefit society as a whole. Development refers more broadly to quality of life and wellbeing, and it is always possible to pursue it, with a view to a more equitable society, at the global level.

Environmental assessment and the traditional economy

Ultimate end (economic growth)

- Allocation
- distribution

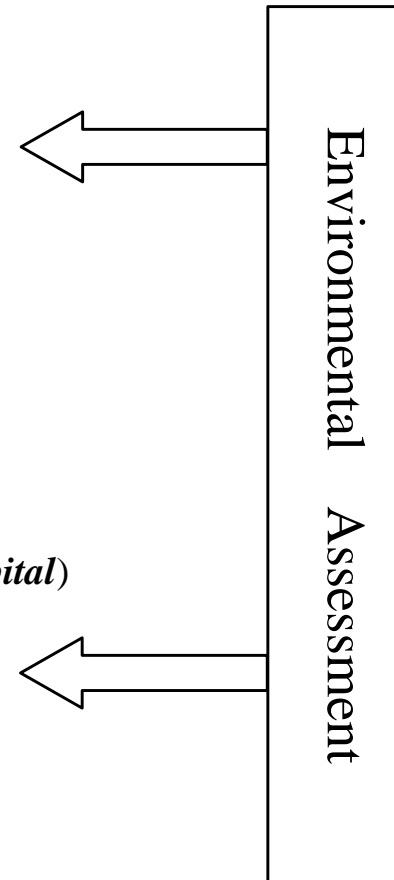


Political economy
(Standard economic problem)

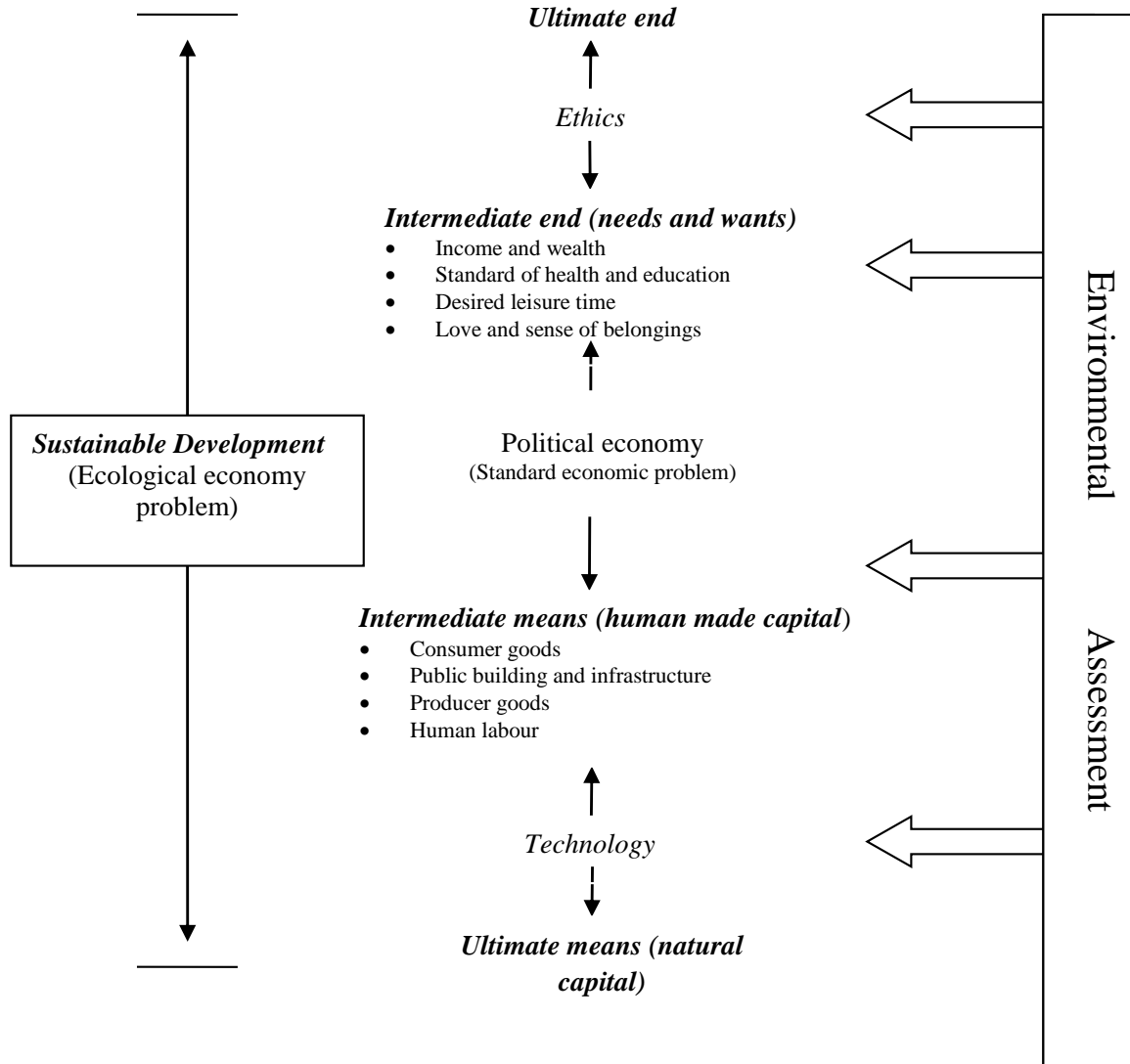


Intermediate means (human made capital)

- Consumer goods
- Public building and infrastructure
- Producer goods
- Human labour
- Natural resources
- Technology



Environmental Assessment and ecological economics



Sustainable development needs a cultural change

- The real question is if the conception of the common good is to be left to the market or to the public participation.
- Environmental Assessment may work better and be effective if the ecological rationality expressed by the theory of sustainable development will prevail both intellectually and concretely.
- Public should participate in the highest strategic decisions concerning the scale and the distributive (quality) aspects.

Sustainable development needs a cultural change

- The existing and proposed EIA Directive are not designed tools for sustainable development

The proposed amendments

- In the preamble a new paragraph should be added: *“The environmental impact assessment could be more effective if Sustainable Development Strategies are in place, at national as local level, providing for the scale and the redistributive aspects of the economy, these to be considered as leading principles for all subsequent assessments”*

The proposed amendments

- In article 3, par. 1 after the words: *“The environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 11,”* the following words: *“ the coherency and contribution to the sustainability goals,*

The proposed amendments

- In article 8, paragraph 1, lett. (a) after the words: *”including a description of the main measures”* insert the words: *“ to reduce the material and energy flows that feeds the economy process and the related production of waste, “*
- In Annex IV – Information Referred To In Article 5(1), paragraph 4, insert at the beginning the words: *“An analysis of the material flows of material and energy that feeds the project and the related production of waste and “*

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Analysis

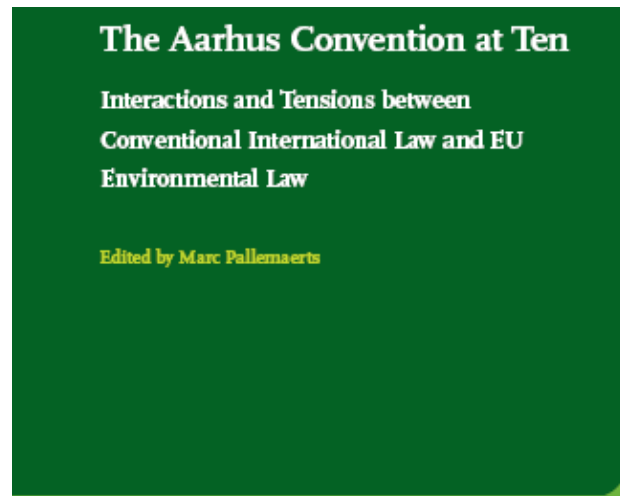
Promise and shortcomings of a green turn in recent policy responses to the “double crisis”

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CHAPTER 2 *Scale of Economic Activity and Environmental Taxation*

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and Aldo Ravazzi
Douvan



CHAPTER 1 *Economy, Ecology and Environmental Democracy*

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