

Editorial

This issue contains three articles and one editorial article.

In her article “Exploring the Policy Use of Sustainable Development Indicators: Interviews with Finnish Politicians” Ulla Rosenström reveals that none of the interviewees recall using the sustainable development indicators developed to support Finnish policy-making. The findings indicate that the greatest potential use of sustainable indicators is symbolic and conceptual meaning that indicators are used by policy-makers for preparing speeches and presentations. The author concludes that the provider can choose to strengthen either the conceptual and symbolic qualities of the indicators or the policy relevance and links to particular strategies. Though the findings indicate that policy relevance, timely launching and relatedness to the strategic interest of the decision-maker will encourage the direct use of indicators, the author presumes that the challenge is to find politicians willing to use the indicators in decision-making.

The 2nd article “RHYHABSIM as a Stream Management Tool: Case Study in the River Kornerup Catchment, Denmark” by Paul Thorn and John Conallin uses a stream management model to assess the habitat available for spawning and juvenile trout and how the habitat available is affected by changes in a stream’s water flow. The authors consider that the management model is directly applicable in stream management, as it will allow for assessing how changes in water flow affect the habitat of the chosen indicator species. Though other factors such as water temperature could affect the available habitat for spawning and juvenile trout, the authors argue that the model will also allow for assessing how much the water flow needs to be increased in order to meet the needs of the indicator species. The direct lack of biological data such as habitat suitability curves for brown trout in eastern Denmark is identified as the weakest point in using the model. The case study is an example of model making that does not include all factors affecting carrying capacities of streams for indicator species such as fish.

In the article “Encounters between Ordinary People and Environmental Science – A transdisciplinary Perspective on Environmental Literacy” Eva Heiskanen reviews the different conceptualisations of the relation between scientific knowledge and everyday knowledge about the environment. The review addresses sustainability in the communication of science from a user’s perspective. The author points out the need for acknowledging that scientific knowledge is not valid in all local contexts and that a fruitful dialogue between locally relevant and universal knowledge only can be provided by involving those with specific local knowledge about the context. In particular, the review highlights problems related to everyday life understanding and use of scientific knowledge and the need for providing ordinary people with skills for making sense of expert knowledge about the environment.

For future issues of TES, the editors invite papers on sustainability and in order to facilitate the inputs we have provided a categorization of existing studies of sustainability in the article “Sustainable development and TES”.

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