

Editorial

This issue of TES contains four articles: one dealing with technology transfer from sustainable technology demonstration projects to practical use; one on transportation and noise abatement; one on maritime transport of “white” oils; and finally an article analysing the Dutch implementation of the EU Nitrate Directive through the Minas system.

The article “Action Research for Sustainable Housing – Theoretical and Methodological Implication in Striving for Research as a Tool for Change” by Susanna Elfors and Örjan Svane, looks at technology transfer from sustainable housing demonstration projects to general building practices. As a starting point, the article points out that there is in fact an overall lack of transferability of the technologies developed through these demonstration projects. In order to address this problem, the authors developed a model, “Action Research for Environmentally Sustainable Housing” or ARESH. Their model focuses on the interaction between the researchers from the project, and the recipients of the technologies (residents, developers and owners). The authors stress the importance of knowledge dissemination as well as reflection on the success/failure of the demonstration by both the researchers and the recipients, both important aspects in order for the technologies to be successfully disseminated into general use. As energy prices continue to increase and with increasing societal focus on environmental issues including climate change, sustainable, energy efficient technology transfer will continue to become more and more important. The ARESH model can be used as a tool to help in the discussion on how to maximize the transfer of these technologies from demonstration projects.

Claus Hedegaard Sørensen’s article “How to Encourage Road Noise Abatement in Nordic Municipalities”, takes a look the problem of road noise, and why the Nordic countries are having difficulties in meeting national targets for road noise reduction. The article describes two different case studies, one on Hørsholm, Denmark and the other on Stockholm, Sweden, in order to provide an analysis of the conditions important for making municipalities implement road noise abatement measures. Based on the analysis of the case studies, the author lists a number of conditions which have a positive impact on noise abatement implementation, including conditions within the municipal organisation, within the community (i.e. engaged citizens), and the state institution (i.e. legislation and financial incentives from the national government). The author points out that the presence or absence of some of the positive conditions, such as engaged citizens, can mean the difference between road noise policies being implemented or ignored.

The article by Thomas Höfner and Lutz Mez, titled “United Nations’ Regulatory Policy under Changing Advocacy Coalitions: The Case of Maritime Transport of Primary Products” describes the process concerning regulations for the transport of non-mineral (including vegetable) oils, also called “white” oils. Even though international shipping safety standards were put in place for mineral oil tankers in the 1970’s, standards for the white oils were generally ignored in spite of similar risks to marine ecosystem in the case of spillage. This article provides an analytical description of the process that was taken to include shipping regulations for white oils on top of the regulations for mineral oils – a process which began almost two decades after the original mineral oil transport regulations. The analysis includes a discussion of how the different stakeholders interacted, including the changing of stances and negotiation coalitions in the middle of the process.

The article by Stuart Wright and Christina Mallia, “The Dutch Approach to the Implementation of the Nitrate Directive: Explaining the Inevitability of its Failure”, takes an in depth look at the Dutch Minas program, which was developed in order to reduce excessive amounts of nutrients applied to agricultural land. The Minas program was implanted by the Dutch instead of the mandatory measures stipulated in the EU Nitrate Directive. The Minas program, eventually deemed a failure, was discontinued in 2006. The authors use a number of interviews with representatives within the relevant sectors in order to obtain a balanced investigation as to why the Minas program failed. Through the analysis, it was concluded that the Minas program was doomed from the start for two reasons. First, the Dutch did not account for that the Minas program did not meet EU demands, and were subsequently ruled to be in non-compliance of the Nitrate Directive. Secondly, inaccuracies in the nitrate accounting system were overlooked during the setting up of the program, initiating a chain reaction which eventually ended with widespread resistance of the Minas program itself from the people who were using it.

As usual, we welcome the submission of papers to be considered for publication. The deadline for papers to be considered for the next issue is January 15, 2009.

Paul Thorn
Co-Editor