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Feature

The need for EIA theory-building

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Abstract

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) practice has evolved without a sound conceptual foundation. More reflective practice and more coherent theory-building are required. An EIA perspective is offered on the nature, role, and types of theory, theory levels, the relationship of theory and practice, and the analysis-synthesis process. EIA theory-building is depicted as directed, rigorous, practical, evolving, heuristic, collaborative, risky, uncertain, complex, critical, reflective, designed, value-full, ethical, political, pluralistic, contingent, boundary-spanning, constrained, and opportunistic. Implications of each theory-building characteristic for EIA theory-building and practice are assessed, and priorities are identified.



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