

Name of Method: Impact matrices

Summary of Method: Construction of an impact matrix enables the interactions between activities and receptors to be identified. The result is a visual summary of impacts, with the potential for impacts to be ranked or weighted for example according to significance. The method can be used to evaluate direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, with the completed matrix being useful in determining data gaps or where insufficient quality or quantity of data exists. Other examples of its use are where changes are anticipated in different temporal as well as spatial scales. In such instances, it is difficult to use approaches such as flow diagrams for determining cause-effect, with a series of matrices being a suitable alternative.

Advantages of Method: The method provide a good visual summary of impacts and can be adapted to identify and evaluate indirect, cumulative and impact interactions. Impacts can also be weighted/ranked.

Limitations of Method: Matrices can be complex and cumbersome to use and are not quantitative.

References: ABPmer, 2004. Cause-Consequence Model – published on <http://www.estuary-guide.net/>.

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