

NAAEE Releases Environmental Literacy Assessment Framework

The question of how to assess environmental literacy has finally been answered. On December 1, 2011, the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) released "A Framework for Assessing Environmental Literacy" at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. and live on the internet. To read an executive summary or the entire document, click [here](#).

In the United States, government agencies, professional organizations, education institutions, and corporations have demonstrated their interest in the enhancement of environmental literacy by investing hundreds of millions of dollars in efforts to achieve that goal. Internationally, the United Nations' Decade of Education for Sustainable Development is nearing an end. To aid in gauging our progress in achieving environmental literacy nationally and internationally, this project has built on recent groundbreaking efforts to conduct large-scale assessments of environmental literacy and facilitate the development of a next generation of national and international assessments

This document presents a new, comprehensive, research-based description of environmental literacy and applies that work to the creation of a framework for an assessment of environmental literacy that is proposed as an optional component in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2015. This collaborative effort brought together, for the first time, experts in research, assessment, and evaluation in the fields of social studies education, science education, environmental education, and related science and social science fields, who critiqued early drafts, provided references, and suggested revisions.

This document and the analysis on which it rests are intended as a guide for developers of large-scale national and international assessments of environmental literacy who wish to answer the question "to what degree do targeted populations have the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors to competently make decisions and act on local, regional, national, and global environmental issues?" Together, the supporting material and the PISA framework are designed to provide a systematic means of considering the many decisions that must be made in the design of an assessment for a specific purpose and population, and, as such, may also be of interest to researchers and policymakers.

Karen Hollweg, Past President of the NAAEE and a Project Manager for this initiative, conveyed the importance of the event by stating "Given the scope and scale of investments and interest in the enhancement of environmental literacy on the part of government agencies, professional organizations, education institutions and corporations, assessments for gauging our progress are needed."