The LIAISE Network of Excellence – State of developments

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Linking Impact Assessment Instruments to Sustainability Expertise

Impact Assessment in Europe

❑ IA used in the European Commission as:

- a method to inform decision makers about potential positive and negative impacts of planned policies incl. unwanted side-effects in adjacent policy areas

- a process to support the preparation of policies

- a mechanism to ensure coherence of policies with grand strategies (e.g. Strategy for Sustainable Development, Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Employment and Europe2020 Strategy.

❑ Implementation: Several hundred IAs produced since 2003; supporting units set up in all DGs and in SecGen

❑ First Guideline published in 2005, updated in 2009

❑ Trends of reform in IA on Member State level

❑ IA requires a rich and fruitful **collaboration** between research and policy

❑ Initiatives are needed to **strengthen current practice** and to **enhance bridging** between the research and the policy community beyond the time span of a 3-5 years research project

❑ **FP7** equipped to fund the development of IA tools (see also FP6 projects Sustainability A-Test, IQ Tools, MATISSE, EVIA, SENSOR, etc) … **but what about the use of these tools?**

Challenges with regard to use of IA tools

❑ **Policy orientation vs. research orientation**

- Policy-makers: robust, simple and transparent tools with proven record of effective use in policy. Researchers: drive to develop/publish new and complex tools

❑ **Complexity vs. transparency**

- Policy-makers need rigorous analysis and explicit recognition where value judgements are made. Scientific models often remain black boxes.

❑ **Maintaining existing investments vs. preparing for the future**

- Promising tools from a policy perspective are often not maintained and used by researchers → future developments lack feedback from practical use cases

❑ **Accessibility vs. applicability**

- Lack of structure to link diverse and ever-changing needs of policy makers with abundance of existing tools on the supply side

- Limited access to data needed to apply the tool

- → policy makers fall back on common-sense rather than rely on best tools available

FP7 Network of Excellence LIAISE http://www.liaise-noe.eu

- Start 1-11-2009, end 30-4-2014

- Costs: EUR 8,35 mio / EC contribution EUR 6,99 mio

- LIAISE unites multi-disciplinary competences of a core of 15 European institutes from 9 countries that consolidate the expertise from large FP6 projects on IA tool development (e.g. SEAMLESS, SENSOR, MATISSE, Sustainability A Test, IQ Tools and EVIA).

Partners:

Alterra *(Netherlands, coordinator)*, FU Berlin *(Germany, co-coordinator)*, Aarhus U *(Denmark)*, AU Thessaloniki *(Greece)*, FEEM *(Italy)*, NERC-CEH *(UK)*, SEI-Tallinn *(Estonia)*, SYKE *(Finland)*, Tecnalia *(Spain)*, U Bonn *(Germany)*, U East Anglia *(UK)*, UFZ *(Germany)*, Wageningen U *(Netherlands)*, ZALF *(Germany)*, ZEW *(Germany)*

Associate partners:

Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) *(UK)*
Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA) *(Germany)*

LIAISE objectives

- ❑ Better understanding of policy process and resulting needs for IA knowledge and IA tools;

- ❑ Standardized description of IA tools and IA expertise;

- ❑ A shared IA toolbox targeting needs of both researchers and practitioners;

- ❑ Formats for interaction between IA researchers and users based on improved understanding of needs for scientific IA knowledge in the policy process;

- ❑ A shared IA research agenda integrating scientific knowledge gaps and the priorities arising from the future policy agenda;

- ❑ Safeguarding project results beyond the period of project funding → extending present consortium to virtual centre of IA excellence

Key elements in LIAISE NoE approach

❑ **Multidisciplinary:** environmental sciences, economics and political sciences

❑ **Innovation:** 1) Analysis of current policy needs; 2) Linkages to the available reservoir of IA knowledge and 3) Testing of innovative solutions in targeted, co-designed and co-produced IA test cases

❑ **Policy Board:** platform for interaction with policy makers and IA practitioners from the EC (policy DGs, JRC, DG Research and Innovation, SecGen), Member States, OECD, NGOs.

❑ **Focus groups:** with IA researchers and IA practitioners to discuss operational issues and user experiences

❑ **On-going Evaluation based on Impact-chain-method.** Targeted at the ambitions beyond the realisation of the project objectives, e.g. the contribution to evidence based policy development

❑ **Strategic aim of long term integration with current consortium partners and additional associated partners**

Survey of IA user needs and expectations in 17 EU countries. Desk research and interviews with 120 people at strategic level:

- ❑ Most popular: scoping tools (e.g. checklists and questionnaires), Cost Benefit and Effectiveness Analysis, administrative burden assessments with Standard Cost Model.

- ❑ Less frequently used: Scenarios, Multi-Criteria Analysis, Modelling tools

- ❑ Practice often does not match the expectations of the Guidance documents.
    - ▪ Many qualitative tools available, but under-used;
    - ▪ Quantification often incomplete/inadequate → mistrusted by policy officials

- ❑ IA users *(policy domain/problem oriented)* vs. IA tool developers *(orientation/rewards/recognition from/by scientific peers)*

- ❑ **Attitudes towards uncertainty**: Scientists *(solution/quantification of uncertainties)* vs. policy-makers *(understanding and framing of policy problems/options for action)*

Standardized descriptions of IA tools – Reference model

❑ **Safeguard minimum level of quality assurance for the description and selection of IA tools with respect to:**
- Testing
- Modelling approaches
- Documentation
- Calibration
- Input data sets

❑ **Collect meta information for the stakeholders in the IA process:**
- Objectives and characteristics of IA tools
- Input and output data
- Sort of studies that can be performed
- Required investments to apply the tool, etc.

❑ **Improve the performance of the tool from a software/technical viewpoint.**

Test cases (EU, national, regional levels) provide learning environment to:

❑ Establish a more realistic understanding of the requirements of policymakers;

❑ Establish operating procedures and contacts for future researcher-policymaker interactions;

❑ Learn how different tools may be used in practice, hence improving existing IA tools;

❑ Facilitate conceptual learning and rethinking of the science-policy interface between policy makers and researchers in the field of IA tools.

Mix of (technical) modellers and social scientists (knowledge brokers).

Shared IA Research Agenda (SRA)

The focus is on three main clusters: 1) *Topics* (policies and processes); 2) *Tools* (tools and data); 3) **Transfer** (science policy interface).

Activities include:

- Mapping and analysis of research groups/networks producing knowledge of relevancy for IA tools and processes;

- Mapping and analysis of research activities that are relevant for IA, e.g. the mapping of FP6/7 projects funded by the European Commission 2012;

- Expert workshops with a focus on specific impact areas and their interaction with other policy areas;

- Interaction and dialogue (e.g. Berlin Conference 2012) with scientists involved in other LIAISE activities, external research groups, networks and funding agencies;

- Design and implementation of interaction between communities of IA researchers, IA practitioners (producers of IAs) and IA users (policy makers, NGOs and the general public)

Shared IA toolbox

The LIAISE toolbox is designed with two main components:

❑ *Front Office:* meta-information to facilitate selection of IA tools for a specific policy proposal.

❑ *Back office:* framework in which users can interact with tools

Taxonomies enable faceted search strings (e.g. for Impact Areas, Modelling Techniques, Policy Areas and Policy Instruments) on databases with:

- Models / tools;

- Contact details for IA Experts;

- Examples of Good Practices of IA;

- Background information on impact areas;

- Background information about generic methods;

- Background information about IA process steps and activities.

The toolbox contains **descriptions of** different types of **IA knowledge** The toolbox serves for two different purposes:

❑ **Library** of models, methods, good practices, experts: Different sources of knowledge are described and can be queried using keywords from the domain of policy Impact assessment.

❑ A **community platform** to collaborate in the field of Impact Assessment: you are invited to share your knowledge in the field of Impact Assessment for Sustainable development: become an expert, a lead editor or upload your publication.

Types of Knowledge and Taxonomies in the Toolbox

Models
- Impact Areas
- Economic Sectors
- Spatial Coverage
- Policy Areas
- Policy Instruments
- Countries
- IPR
- Time Horizon

Experts
- Impact Areas
- Policy Areas
- Disciplines
- IA Methods
- Countries

IA Practices
- Impact Areas
- IA Methods
- IA Activities
- Policy Instruments
- Policy Areas
- Description
- Economic Sectors
- Countries

IA Activities
- IA Methods

IA Methods
- IA Activity

Impact Areas

Using the Toolbox: IA practitioners

IA practitioners may search for

- ❑ **Models** to assess impact on certain impact areas, sectors, countries, etc..

- ❑ **Experts** which may assist in the IA

- ❑ **Methods** that support the different steps of IA

- ❑ Guidance on analyzing **impact areas**

- ❑ Guidance for the **planning of an IA**

- ❑ Practical **examples of IA** which may serve as example for your IA

- ❑ use the toolbox as platform for **collaborative writing** of an IA (*coming soon*)

- ❑ may contribute examples of IA which have been undertaken and which should be shared

Using the Toolbox: IA researchers

IA Researchers may search for

- ❑ **Models** which may be complementary to their own

- ❑ **Experts** for joint activities

- ❑ **Methods** which they want to apply in research

- ❑ Examples of **IA cases**, publications or projects undertaken by other researchers

- ❑ *using the toolbox as a platform for **collaborative research** in the field of IA (coming soon)*
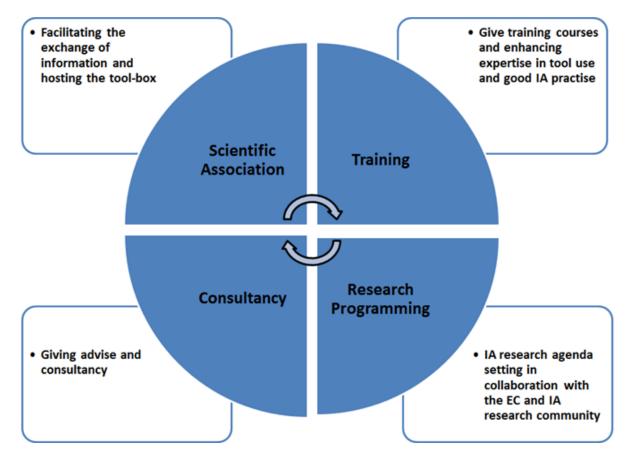
Action plans for extension towards a centre of IA expertise

❑ Present consortium: starting point for transition process;

❑ Objective is to broaden it with partners that can:

- Extend the scientific scope. Priorities: social IA (e.g. employment, health) and IA related to transport and energy issues.

- Strengthen expertise in fields already covered by the present consortium.

❑ Route map and business plans are being developed targeted at:

- A depository of accessible IA knowledge and tools;

- A secure income to cover costs of infrastructure and services;

- An association of supportive partners or members to provide knowledge exchange and networking opportunities;

- A governance structure that supports this association and provides the security and incentives to continue the strive for excellence.

Extension towards a broad centre of IA expertise

Objective: build a virtual centre of IA excellence: an internationally visible, integrated and interdisciplinary scientific community, providing excellent and applicable research in support of IA.

Resulting in an integrated treatment of scientific knowledge gaps and priorities for the development of new IA knowledge that arise from future policy agenda.

How to contribute and participate?

❑ Contact LIAISE info@liaise-noe.eu

❑ Subscribe to LIAISE newsletter www.liaise-noe.eu

❑ Include and advertise your tools and expertise in the LIAISE toolbox
http://beta.liaise-toolbox.eu/

❑ Join LIAISE as an associate partner and participate in development towards future centre of excellence

❑ Participate in LIAISE conferences and workshops (high level conference planned in Spring 2013)

Upcoming events

- ❑ LIAISE contributes to the conference *Science for the Environment*, Aarhus, **3-4 October 2013**: special session and roundtable discussion
- ❑ **http://dce-conference.au.dk/**

Adapting to change: the multiple roles of modelling 1–6 December 2013 ADELAIDE, Australia

MODSIM 2013

20th International Congress on Modelling and Simulation

- ❑ **http://www.mssanz.org.au/modsim2013/**
- ❑ Deadline for abstracts (< 250 words): **April 30, 2013**
- ❑ *Session H14:* Spatio-temporal modelling for human and ecosystem health assessment (*Convenors:* Stefan Reis, Tim Oxley and Daniel Zachary)