Key messages from the LIAISE Network of Excellence (FP7)

and the

Final Event

Knowledge for Decision Making

Klaus Jacob (FUB)
Sander Jansen (Alterra)
Onno Roosenschoon (Alterra)
Jacques Janssen (Alterra)
Camilla Adele (UEA)
Andrew Jordan (UEA)
Tarja Soedermann (SYKE)
Stefan Reis (CEH)
… and the LIAISE Team

LIAISE – Towards a knowledge system for IA for SD

Background:

- Increasing importance of evidence based policy making to achieve a sustainable development
- Funding of research in support of decision making
- **But:** Under-utilization of research reservoir

- Network of Excellence of research institutes committed to IA for SD
- With the ambition of structural permanence
- In dialogue with relevant stakeholders
- Providing a shared toolbox and shared research agenda

Initially 15 research institutes (environmental sciences, economics, social sciences), including further (associated) partners in the course of the network

Reasons for the underutilization of research

Currently:

- Not described at all: Lack of documentation
- Technical descriptions: understanding requires disciplinary skills
- Focus on methods and less on possible applicability and results
- Lack of integration across disciplines
- User needs not well understood and implemented

The LIAISE approach:

⇒ Development of a **standard to describe models**:
The *Reference Model for Impact Assessment* Tools (RM-IAT)

⇒ Describing knowledge in the **context of IA** to ensure relevancy of knowledge

⇒ User requirements analysis with IA users to develop new and improved tools

⇒ Integrating and linking different types of knowledge in the context of IA for SD

LIAISE: case study of knowledge systems

Case study: Impact assessment

- **Ultimate goal:** better decision making for sustainable development
- **LIAISE objective:** investigate the practice of impact assessment as a knowledge system in different ways
  - Review of state-of-the-art
  - Study developments in the future
  - Investigate the possibilities of modern information technology and social media
  - Investigate the durability of the network
  - Try different set-ups of knowledge delivery
- All under the assumption: there is a possibility of delivering more scientific knowledge to decision making which leads to sustainable development

Testing tool use in LIAISE

LIAISE tested IA tool use and knowledge exchange in 6 real-world cases to:

- Create a realistic understanding of the requirements of knowledge users in relation to possibilities of knowledge production:
  - *in what circumstances, contexts, certain knowledge brokering approaches are fit for purpose?*
- Investigate procedures for interaction between researchers and policy-makers
  - *when step-wise approach of interaction in IA is suitable?*
- Examine current use possible uses of existing impact assessment tools
  - *what IA results were used and unused?*

Lessons learned for co-design of knowledge I

- Collaboration in IA increases the use of IA results in policy-making **but requires trust and credibility** based on previous cooperation, or built during (long) IA process
- **Openness about limitations** of a tool increases credibility
- **Long-term exchange on knowledge claims** is expected from researchers by policy-makers rather than short-term IA support (in-house or consulting task)
- Ex post IAs, individual policy-measure (relatively narrow) IAs and **emerging policy areas are more open** for high level knowledge exchange - learning

Lessons learned for co-design of knowledge II

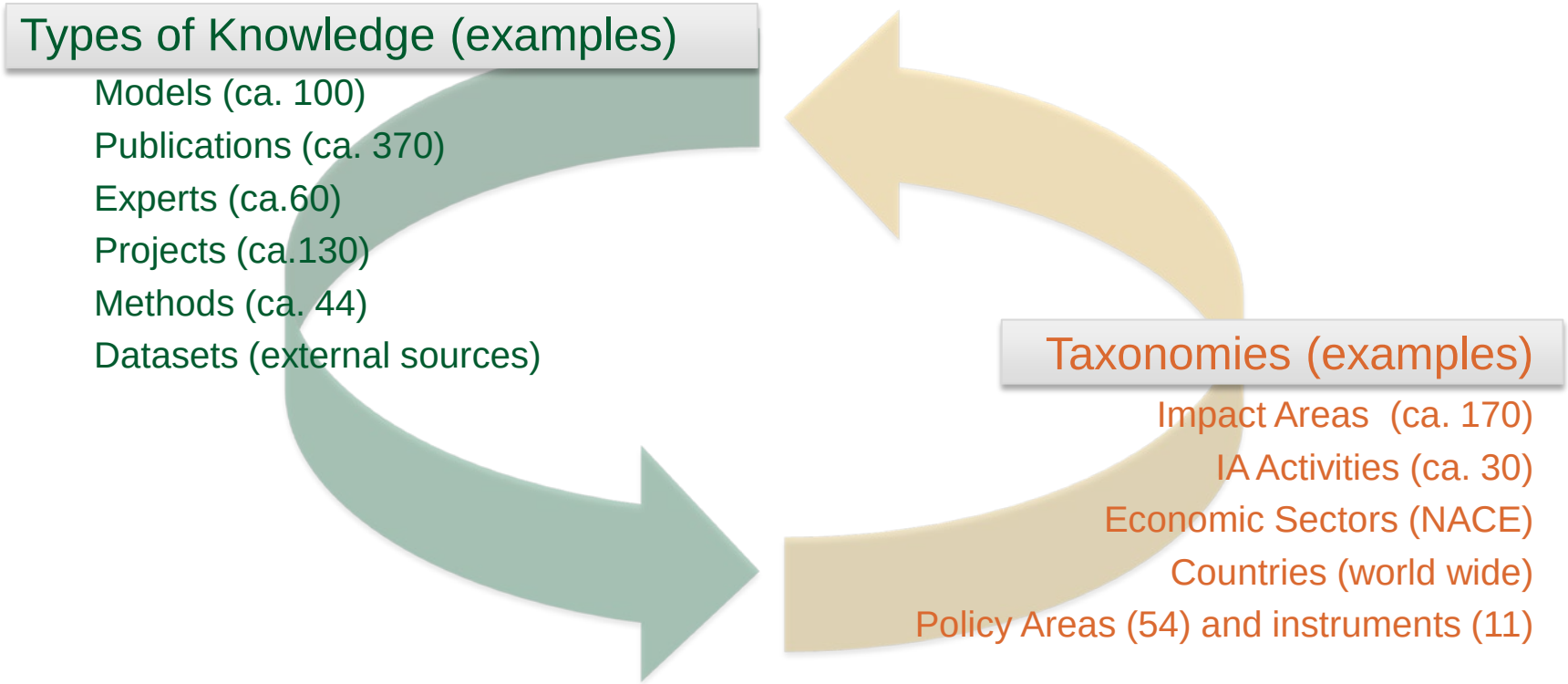
- It is challenging to develop a new tool for real-life ongoing policy-process – time and political constraints
- Iterative **co-design of knowledge is enabled by tools** that are
  - Already existing
  - Easy-to-apply/ transparent
  - Time-saving for policy actors
  - Procedural but allowing choices, and
  - Including an element of co-tailoring relevance by policy-makers' questions
- Communicative and adaptive **IT platforms, like LIAISE KIT**, can facilitate knowledge exchange when recognised by both research and policy actors

Methods

- Realisation that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach, as the users of IA tools are inherently diverse and have complex requirements.
- 1:1 **interviews** typically provide the richest data, but are time consuming and require a substantial buy-in of users.
- **Workshops** and **focus groups** compromise in insight, but provide viable options and allow for follow-up with individual users later on.
- **Questionnaires** and **electronic communication** facilitate outreach and allow for gathering of input from a wide range of users.

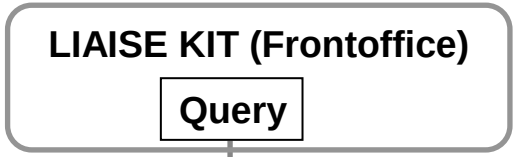
A key element to improve the utilisation of research-based models and tools is the development of user-friendly tools, with better interfaces tailored to the needs of the anticipated end-user

LIAISE KIT: a platform for contextualised knowledge



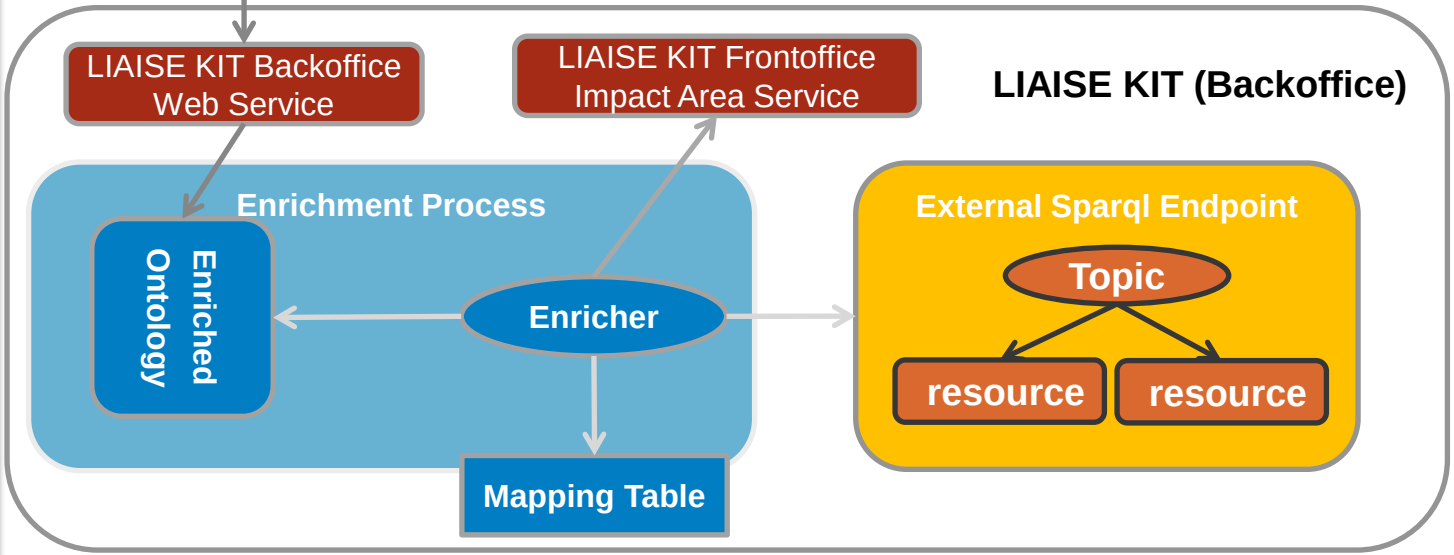
Data sources

- Review of publications and projects
- Contributions by researchers
- Lead editors for methods and impact areas
- Integration in web of data: Example of EEA datasets



Future: Natural Language Questions: e.g.

"What model could I use to assess critical load exceedance of air pollutant depositions?"



Stakeholder views on the use of models & IA tools I

Bas Eickhout (MEP):

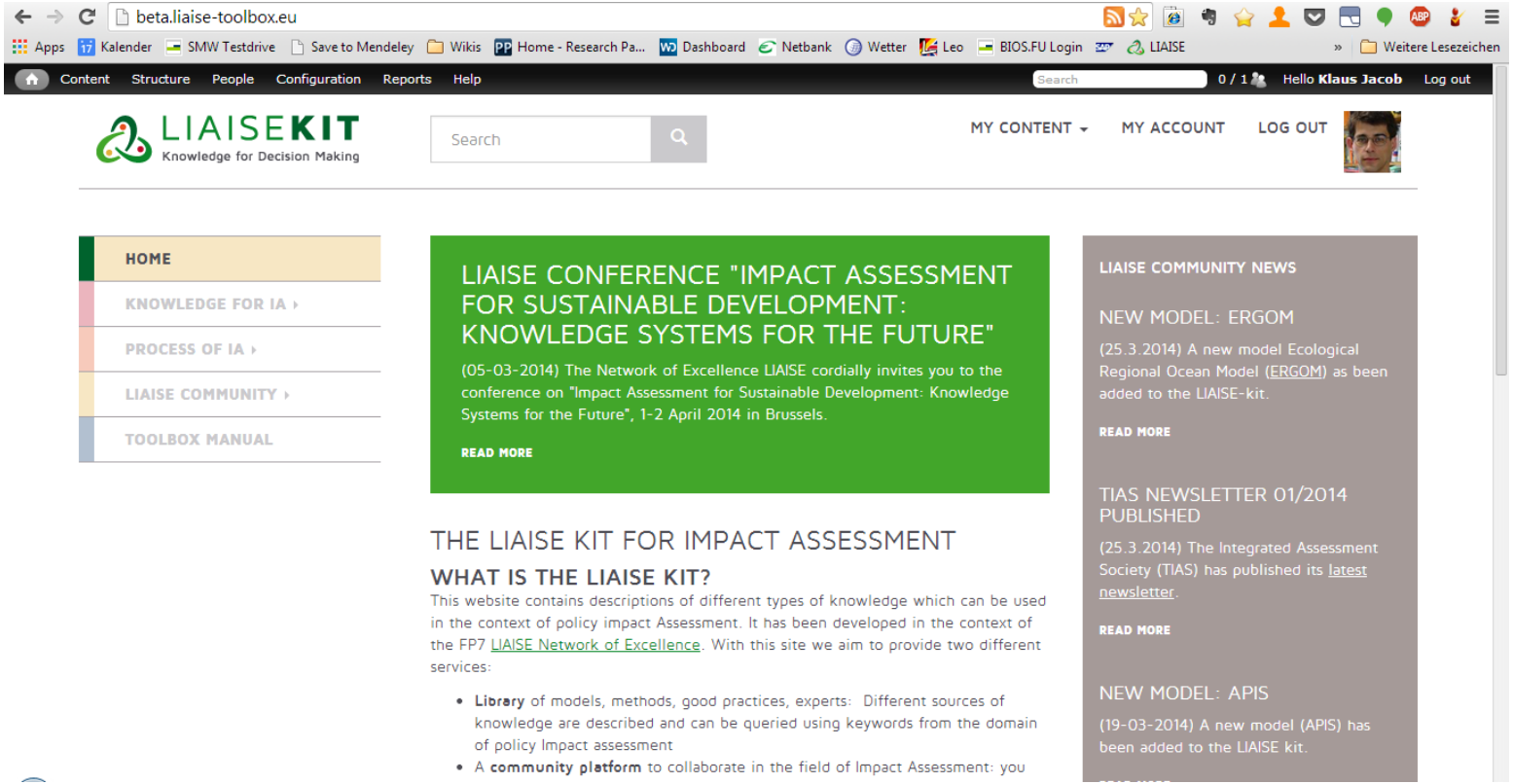
- Politicians **accept models as black boxes** (have no time to look into its backgrounds) and accept results of Impact Assessments/Integrated Assessments as given *(unless a model is discredited such as the PRIMES model).*
- Scientists are often insufficiently aware that the European Commission is a political body *(with certain political goals)*. They must be more suspicious and aware of potential misuse of scientific knowledge.
- For new issues (such as shale gas extraction or biofuels) politicians are often guided by 'trusted' scientists (or scientific advocates). Uncertainties become politicized and if no scientific body is sufficiently trusted to end the debate.

Stakeholder views on the use of models & IA tools II

Bas Eickhout (MEP):

- Don’t underestimate the power of vested interest groups. Learn from them: **framing of the problem is essential**, the positive of negative association of certain words, focus on simple indicators that are crucial for the political debate (instead of complex indices or long lists of variables).
- The political debate focuses **on solutions and measures** and not on problem analysis. Scientists tend to focus too much on problem analysis and contribute to little to policy formulation.
- Scientists should **participate more actively in the co-decision** phase, as the compromise is often dominated by lobbying (= information exchange) from the most active stakeholders.

LIAISE KIT: www.liaise-kit.eu



As a **researcher** or **consultant**, you are invited to upload your expertise and become expert, upload examples of IAs, related projects or publications, descriptions of models or methods. You may also become a **lead editor** for an impact area or a family of methods! Do you miss anything in the LIAISE KIT? liaise@zedat.fu-berlin.de