Impact Assessment for Sustainable Development, A vision for the future

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LIAISE

Linking Impact Assessment Instruments to Sustainability Expertise

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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Content of the presentation

1. Overview LIAISE Network, products and objectives

2. Impact assessment for Sustainable development, a vision for the future

3. Questions?

- 2009 – 2014, 8 million euro / EC contribution 7 million euro
- community of experts on impact assessment
- multi-disciplinary
- consolidating expertise SEAMLESS, SENSOR, MATISSE, Sustainability A Test, IQ Tools, EVIA...

Partners: Alterra (Netherlands, coordinator), FUB (Germany, co-coordinator), AU (Denmark), AUTH (Greece), FEEM (Italy), NERC (UK), SEIT (Estonia), SYKE (Finland), Tecnalia (Spain), UBO (Germany), UEA (UK), UFZ (Germany), WU (Netherlands), ZALF (Germany), ZEW (Germany)

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Slide 3

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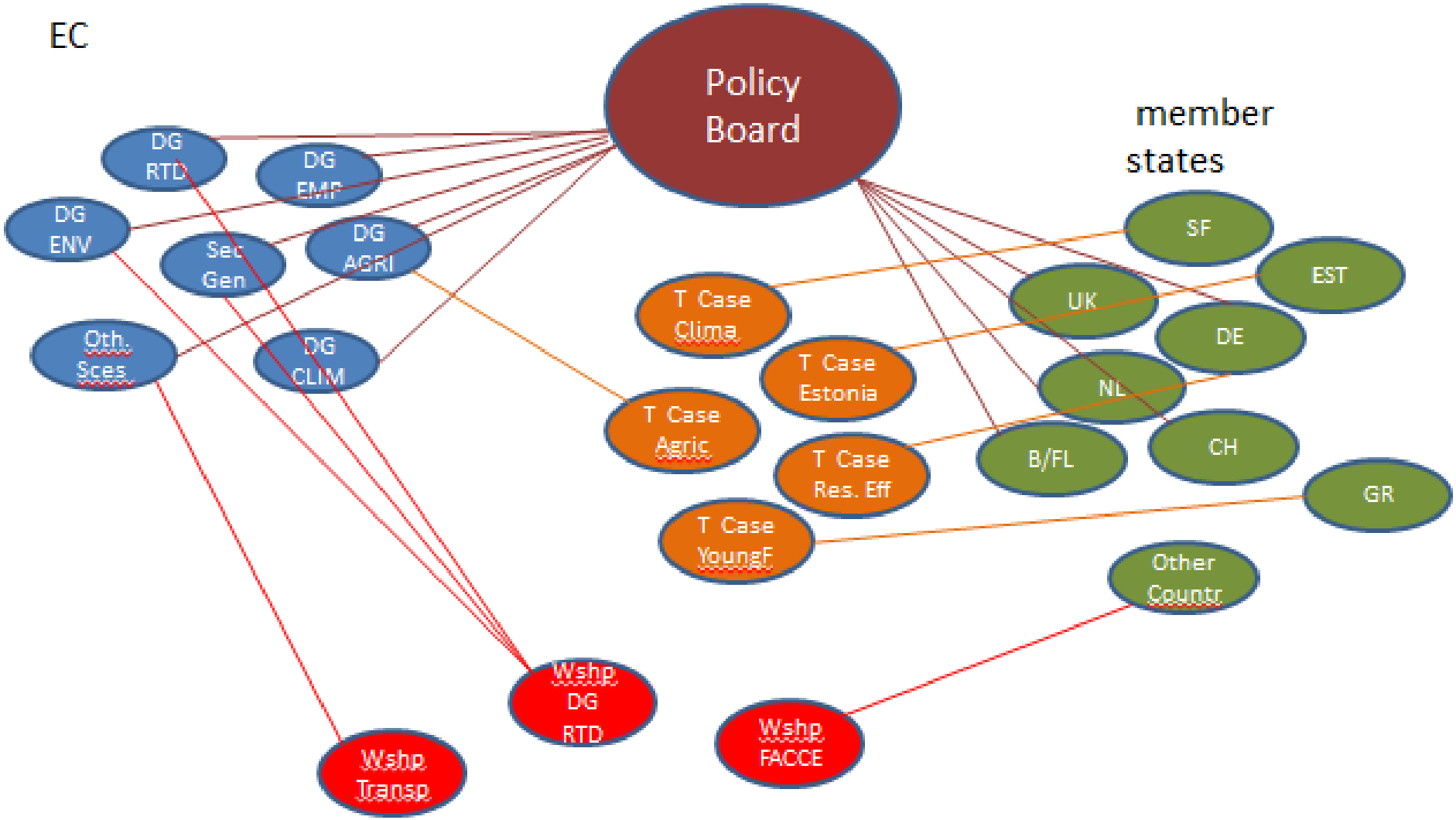
Aalbers, Carmen; 01-10-2013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LIAISE objectives

1. Understanding policy process and needs for IA knowledge and -tools
2. Standardised description tools and scientific expertise
3. Shared IA toolbox targeted at needs researchers and practitioners
4. Shared IA research agenda integrating gaps and priorities that arise from the future policy agenda
5. Developing a broad centre of IA expertise with a structural permanence.

http://www.liaise-noe.eu

Objectives of IA for SD

- Ex-ante appraisal to provide evidence for needs and benefits of planned policies
- demonstrate impacts on the different dimensions of Sustainable Development

Trend: example within EU and its member states

- Several hundred IAs produced since 2003
- Supporting units in all DGs of the EC
- First Guideline published in 2005, updated in 2009
- Broad trend of reform in IA on Member State level

- SD is a special challenge: trade offs between dimensions, scales, geografic entities,
- Long term
- Requires transdisciplinarity
- Requires openness of the IA process
- Contextualisation of knowledge needed, in particular integration of policy analysis in the scientific process

Vision for the future of IA for SD

Relationship IA and SD 9/20

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Current practice IA:

- The hypothesis is that better IA and better evidence basis leads to better decisions in terms of sustainable development.

Future ambition:

- Realizing that a better evidence base as incorporated in IA does not equate to better decision making for sustainable development, requiring a redefinition of the desired role of impact assessment.

Slide 10

CA8 overlaps with the previous one

Aalbers, Carmen; 01-10-2013

Knowledge production versus Decision making 10/20

Current practice IA:

- Processes of knowledge production and process of decision making are separate entities which each have their own logic.
- Poor understanding of the different logics
- Leading to misunderstanding of who can contribute what and where.
- Methods to bring insights from research into the decision making processes could therefore be missed.

Future ambition:

- The process of IA must receive more attention
- Researchers responsible to better target at needs decision makers, in set up of IA research and of 'mining' the present knowledge reservoir
- Decision makers and different actors engage in an open process in which interests are explicit, knowledge sources accredited to evaluate different decision options. They’re responsible for use/non-use evidence.
- Researchers and decision makers are jointly responsible for the interaction processes that are needed for an optimal use of scientific evidence, to understand each others different own logics

Current practice IA:

- Stakeholders involved superficially for legitimation or for expert consultation.
- Co-design is rare
- Likelihood that opportunities for building a support platform for changes are missed

Future:

- involving stakeholders in the whole process, from the outset (targeting, choices) until the final use.
- Research to develop the knowledge brokerage tools to adequately work with stakeholders in all their perceptions in all phases of the process

Integration and complexity

Current Practice IA:

- limited set of disciplines
- one discipline at its core
- can’t be deployed at short notice.

Future ambition:

- integrative in drawing knowledge and perspectives from all dimensions of sustainability
- from across scientific disciplines
- directly from the start.

Short and long term

Current Practice IA:

- stronger focus on short term issues, (budget division, geographical boundaries, income issues).

Future ambition:

- short ánd long term. Long term benefits and adverse impacts must have a similar weight and importance.
- Research must adopt appropriate long term perspective in its methods, focus, and its own organization.

Current practice IA:

- IA and providing evidence to decision making relies heavily on who provides the evidence and the relationships between these individuals. Can be a strength but could also lead to exclusion of other relevant information.

Future ambition:

- Transparency
- Research role to provide trustworthy information.
- Decision makers and other stakeholders affected by decision have a role to be open to different sources of information and perceptions by others, including, but not exclusively researchers

Quality of evidence

Current practice:

- quality of evidence hardly measured, monitored, evaluated
- weakness in evaluating usefulness of tools applied in the IA process.

Future ambition:

- Unlocking meta data in standardized way in Open Access portals, that supply state-of-the-art information required for comparison of different sources of knowledge.
- Methods for quality control to avoid Pandora's boxes

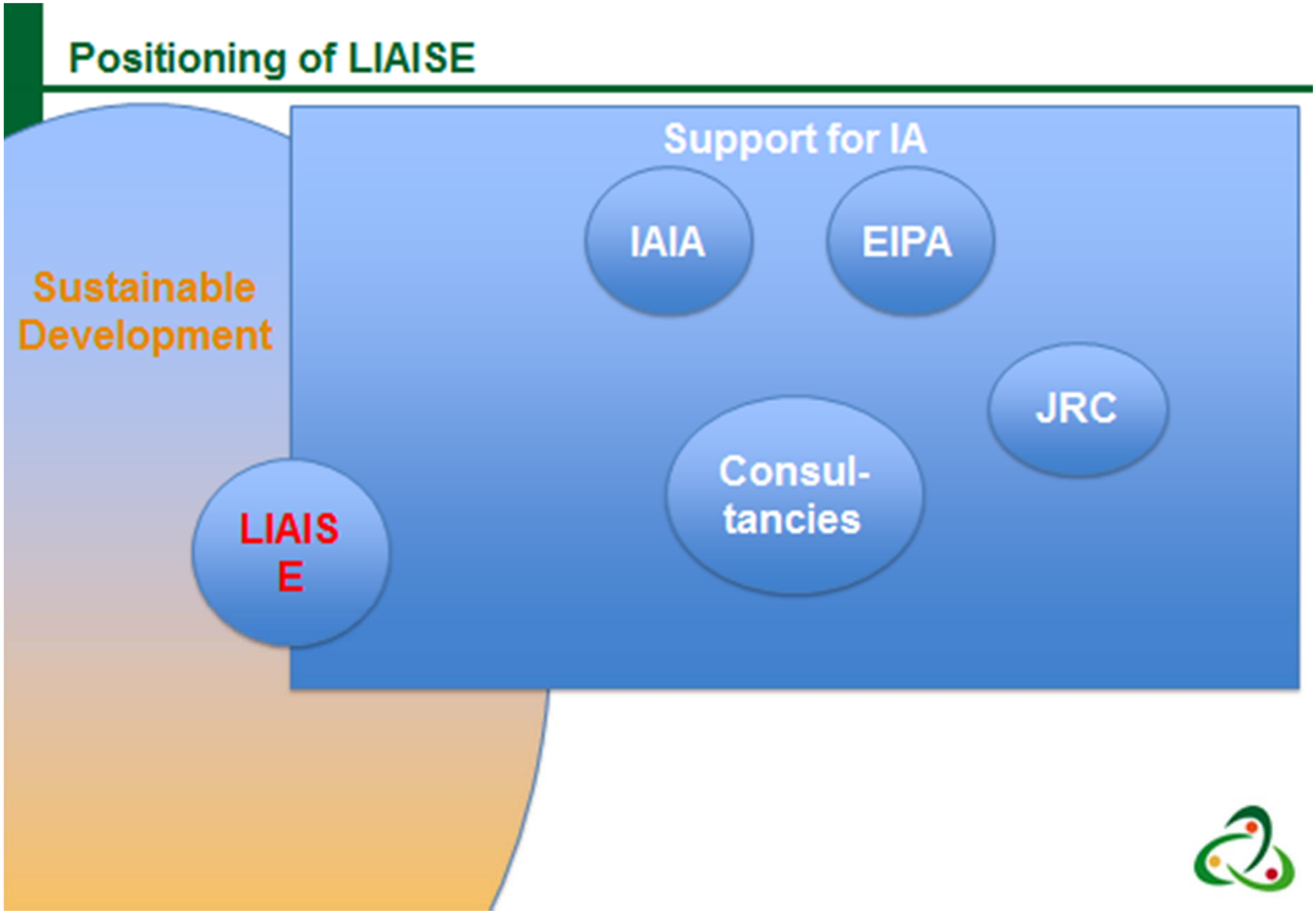
Worldviews and assumptions in evidence provision 16/20

Current practice IA:

- main worldviews and perspectives of the producers and users are not explicit, leading to a situation where the impact of these fundamental beliefs on the type and relevance of the evidence and knowledge produced is unknown

Future ambition:

- Worldviews, perspectives and underlying assumptions are explicit in an easy to review and balanced method, so that these can be discussed, and alternatives can be proposed.


Positioning of LIAISE
Support for IA
IAIA
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Functions of LIAISE post project entity

Function	Description	Users	Partners
News agent	New developments and interesting cases in IA and appraisal, through short reflective articles, press releases, news letters, and social media feeds	IA practitioners (policy analysts, consultants, (applied) researchers), tool developers, society, press	
Think thank	Critically reviewing evidence and sketching critical issues, plus future pathways of development	Auditors (controlling the IA processes), parliaments, academic research, impact units within organizations	
Quality monitor	Evaluating the quality of IA, the tools and providing targeted and well validated meta-information on cases, tools, practices, key experts and organizations	Tool developers (applied and academic research), IA practitioners (i.e. those effectuating an IA),	JRC, scientific societies
Learning centre	Organising courses on current and upcoming issues with respect to IA, providing standard training bringing students (both profession and academic) on an adequate level	IA practitioners, applied researchers, PhD students	EIPA
Innovation generator	Identifying upcoming issues, tracking developments, bringing relevant groups together for agenda activities	Research, research and innovation funders/investors, IA practitioners (i.e. those effectuating an IA)	
Networking and Discussion forum	Organize events with attention for ad-hoc meetings, challenging presentations and learning by doing	IA practitioners, research	IAIA
Experimental Lab	Allowing new forms of interaction in IA in a monitored and safer setting	IA practitioners, research	

The nature of the post project entity

- foster individuals and organizations to learn and be challenged;
- transcend traditional disciplinary and science – policy boundaries, actualize a new type of science based on inter-disciplinarity, transparency and active stakeholder involvement;
- assemble critical insights for society on the complexity and relevance of long term perspectives on the road towards sustainable development;
- Sensitize the environment for discussion on impact assessment and likely impacts in decision appraisal for sustainable development;
- Be open and invite other stakeholders and different views.

The challenge…..

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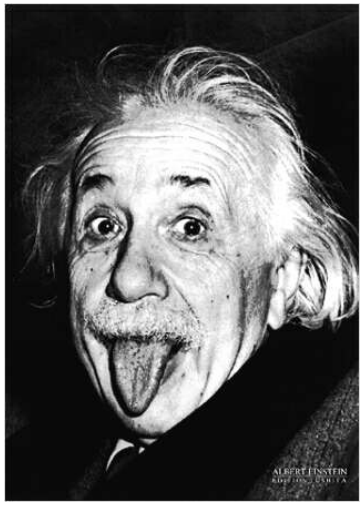

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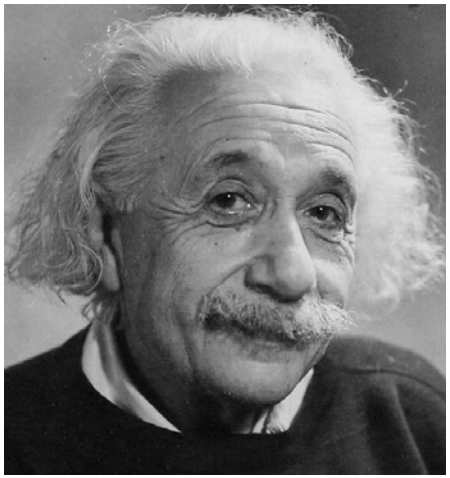

Thank you for your attention.

Questions? Discussion?

For more info: www.liaise-noe.eu