The LIAISE approach to co-designing knowledge on impact assessment

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LIAISE

Linking Impact Assessment Instruments to Sustainability Expertise

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Aims of the presentation

- Outline the overall LIAISE approach
- Discuss the process of production, distribution and utilization of knowledge in environmental governance
- Emphasize the role of policy appraisal tools
- Introduce and discuss knowledge brokerage as an approach to improve SPI and use of tools
- Illustrate the role of different contexts in SPI

Impact Assessment (IA) in Europe

- IA used in the European COM 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, set up of supporting units in all DGs and in SecGen
- First Guideline published in 2005, updated in 2009
- Broad trend of reform in IA on Member State level

Context and challenges

- 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 the 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

LIAISE and test cases: focus on impact assessment tools

LIAISE Toolbox

User needs, assessment procedures and governance

IA Tool development and improvement

LIAISE Network of excellence 2009-2014

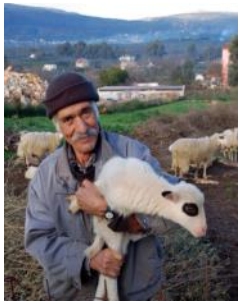
Test cases

Research agenda for IA

Dissemination and training

Post-project durability

- *Agri* test case on European level
- *Resource efficiency* test case on national and European level
- *Finnish energy and climate strategy* test case
- *Rural development plan* test case on regional level in Greece
- *Estonian energy policy* test case
- *Land use management* in China test case






LIAISE test cases provided learning environment to:

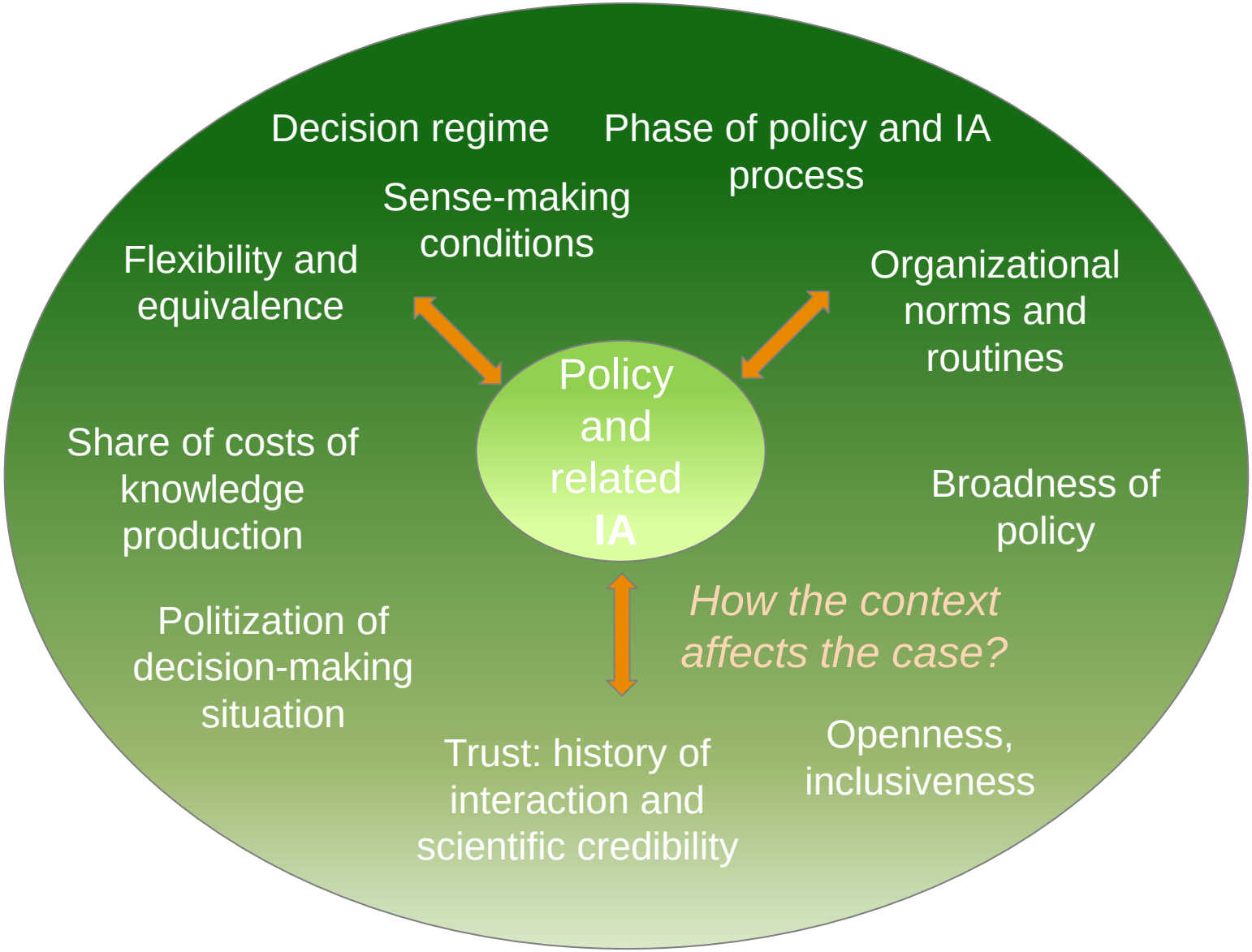
- Establish a more realistic understanding of the requirements of policymakers;
- Establish operating procedures and contacts for future researcher-policymaker interactions;
- Learn how different tools may be used in practice, hence improving existing IA tools;
- Facilitate conceptual learning and rethinking of the science-policy interface between policy makers and researchers in the field of IA tools;
- Learn how transdisciplinary knowledge integration can take place (among test case researchers and modellers)

Tools for science-policy interface

Knowledge brokering as a tool for science policy interface

- ”A social processes which encompass relations between scientists and other actors in the policy process, and which allow for exchanges, co-evaluation, and joint construction of knowledge with the aim of enriching decision-making” (van den Hove 2007),
- Applied in test cases from matchmaking to joint problem framing, testing the boundaries of KB in practice
- What factors affect knowledge brokerage and how to broker in different contexts?

Know your context: some examples from the LIAISE test cases



Methodological steps depend on context – step-wise approach

Generic steps in IA Process	LIAISE Support Modules	LIAISE Phasing
I Problem Identification	1) Test Case Formulation and Scheduling	Formulation Phase
II Defining Objectives	2) Identification of Test Case Team and Target Groups	
	3) Policy Storylines and Options	Scoping and Planning Phase
III Develop main policy option	4) Impact Areas and Scales	
	5) IA Scoping and Planning	
IV Analysing Impacts	6) Tool Selection and Technical Specification	Instrumental Phase
	7) Data Requirements and Sources	
V Comparing Options	8) Analysing the results of the tool application	
VI Monitoring and Evaluation	9) Reflection and evaluation of the research-policy interaction: iterative IA Tool testing	Conceptual Learning Phase

Barriers of SPI identified in test cases

Policy-makers:

- Very diverse needs
- Very thematic thinking vs. SD
- Ownership of IA – no room for researchers
- Monopoly, non-open models
- Power struggle between policy sectors
- Few knowledge producers (national and regional level)
- No second opinions available (national and regional level)

Researchers:

- Supply-driven models and tools
- Disciplinary instead generalist approaches
- Competition between researchers, dialogs in science
- Gap in use because of publication process
- Different approaches in science/ methods/ disciplines/ ontologies/ worldviews
- Endangering trust is avoided – results not given until final – lack of testing

General:

- Selective use of proof
- Pre-defined agendas
- Organizational changes
- Lack of continuity – project based culture
- Broking between tools and policy questions
- Very technical focus of IA and use of evidence
- Lack of openness and flexibility
- Non-focus of motivation and objectives of SPI

Recipe for successful science-policy interface is impossible

But some recommendations are possible:

- Get your ‘license’ to support the IA process
  - Know your policy cycle -> timing of interaction
  - Know your policy maker’s knowledge needs
  - Explore and build trust
  - Tailor your communication according to your audience
  - Act stepwise – support modules, what support is needed in certain step
  - Identify and acknowledge/tailor (tools and knowledge) to the context
  - Recognize your role as researcher
  - Create demand for your expertise
- Tools need to be ‘convenience food’ - tailoring and co-development of tools
- Do not reject “quick and dirty” but develop a science-based approach for it
- Be prepared for unexpected situations – flexibility

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Thanks!

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