



LIAISE

**Linking
Impact
Assessment
Instruments to
Sustainability
Expertise**



Discussion Paper

**Populated Toolbox with
Inventories of IA Tools, Impact
Areas and Experts**

Dirk Wascher
Klaus Jacob
Thomas Hüsing
Johanna Ferretti
Sabine Weiland
Onno Roosenschoon
Stratos Arampatzis
Brian Kronvang
Piret Kuldna
Panu Kontio
Katharina Diehl
Klaus Rennings



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Preamble

The deliverable reports on the progress in Work Package 4 and the development of the toolbox front-office. During the conceptualisation and the implementation of the toolbox front office, many different target groups and options for the design of a toolbox have been discovered and explored. This is laid down in previous deliverables (D4.1, D 4.2, D 4.5). In order to assess the requirements from different viewpoints, a prototype has been developed and extensively tested. The findings of this user requirement analysis are reported in this deliverable. The prototype already contains a large number of experts, model descriptions and examples of good practices. During the testing, no additional content has been collected, but instead efforts have been concentrated to develop a beta version of the toolbox which allows adding and editing of content by the users. The concept and the design of the toolbox beta version constitute the second part of this deliverable. Since both, the user requirement analysis as well as the implementation of the next version of the toolbox is closely interrelated, both aspects are integrated in a single deliverable which combines D 4.4 Month 24 and D 4.4 Month 36.

Klaus Jacob
Coordinator of WP4
LIAISE project
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1. Introduction

This deliverable on the ‘Populated Toolbox with Inventories of IA Tools, Impact Areas and Experts’ builds upon the specifications of the toolbox as laid down in deliverables D4.1/4.3 and D4.2. A first version of the toolbox has been implemented as described in D 4.4 (month 18). This initial version of the LIAISE Toolbox (<http://alpha.liaise-toolbox.eu>) is based on the inventory for IA Tools distinguishing between models and methods, including an own inventory of the LIAISE models, European and national information on Impact Areas deriving from both existing sources (EU Guidelines 2009, German Federal Government 2008) complemented by an initial list of IA experts (own data 2011). Furthermore, an inventory of Good Practices has been included from the report of TEP to JRC-IPTS (TEP 2009), the Commission website with examples on good practices and own coding of recent impact assessments (for the years 2010 and 2011).

The initial version of the toolbox has been used to extensively collect user feedback among researcher and policy maker on the functionalities and the content of the toolbox. The collection of user feedback has been given priority over the adding of new content. The current deliverable D 4.4 reports firstly on the collection and the finding of user feedback.

Based on these findings, WP4 developed a new version of the toolbox (beta.toolbox-liaise.eu). The Toolbox Beta Version has been launched at the occasion of Toolbox Milestone Event in Edinburgh on June 20th 2012. Since then, the beta version has been continuously developed further to meet the user requirement as identified in the Toolbox User Feedback Assessment. During this phase, the structural and technical adjustments have been standing central. For instance, technical functionalities for entering content (e.g. new models and methods) have only been accomplished in September 2012. As a consequence, the population of the Toolbox with new and updated contents has only begun as can be detected in the only few additions we report upon. The new and different features of the Beta Version are described in the second part of the report.

2. Results of the LIAISE User Feedback Assessment

2.1 Approach

The design of the LIAISE Toolbox for Impact Assessment has been based on

- the review of existing toolboxes development,
- of a concept and presentation during the LIAISE annual meeting and the Policy Board
- the expertise of the participating research teams in conducting IA studies and the development of methods and models for this purposes

Based on this stock of knowledge, a prototype for a toolbox was constructed. This was undertaken in close collaboration with WP3 which



provided a framework for the meta descriptions of the models by means of the Reference Model (D3.1). A simplified version of this was implemented in the toolbox prototype. This has been reported in D 4.4 (month 18).

To describe the toolbox content a number of taxonomies were developed. The taxonomies were derived from the IA policy and process as well as from scientific standards. By combining these taxonomies content can be identified from both perspectives.

The search engine was based on a faceted search. By combining different taxonomies, the search can be drilled down. The faceted search allows identifying objects which fulfill the user requirements at least partially.

The toolbox was filled with content from the LIAISE consortium (experts and models), the IA Tools database from JRC IPTS (models and good practices), the IA guidelines and the EU COM website (Impact Areas and Good Practices), the German requirements for a sustainability Impact Assessment (Impact Areas), and the results from the country studies undertaken in WP1 (country information).

The toolbox prototype is accessible via <http://alpha.liaise-toolbox.eu/>, using the username "liaise" and the password "alphaur".

Access to the toolbox has been granted on request. In particular the following groups have been invited for testing the toolbox and for providing feedback:

- Policy Officers:
 - o LIAISE Policy Board
 - o WP1 Interview Partners
 - o Test Case teams (EU and national officials)
- Researchers:
 - o LIAISE consortium and researchers in the LIAISE research organisations
 - o WP2 projects

The research team collected and examined the user feedback by means of three methods: a web-based questionnaire, the analysis of web-statistics and the organisation of Focus Group discussions with researchers and policy makers as a method of qualitative research.

Individual feedback by means of personal communications has been gathered and analysed.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was meant to gather user feedback on the functionalities of a LIAISE Toolbox prototype for guiding its further development before launching the next version of the Toolbox implemented in DRUPAL. The very goal of this prototype is to test the various search functionalities which have been put in place to help users from both policy as well as research identifying an appropriate set of tools or tool (models or methods) when performing Impact Assessment. The questionnaire consists of a basic part addressing the user, one part addressing the database-related search functions with special attention to the taxonomies which are being offered, and a final section on Impact Areas. After an initial period of waiting for

questionnaires to come in we started to closely collaborate with WP2 who had consulted more than 150 IA experts when analysing tool-related FP6 and FP7 projects. WP2 included the request to fill in the Toolbox questionnaire in their subsequent review process. We received 28 answers among which were 50% by scientists and 20% policy officers. The remaining did not reveal their identity.

The questionnaire is documented in the annex of this deliverable. It was implemented in an internet based survey software (limequery.org).

Focus Group Sessions

Besides being considered as resource efficient and pragmatic, Focus Group sessions provide space for generating new knowledge by accessing and exchanging *tacit* knowledge of participants. Focus Group discussions are propelled by the interaction *between* participants who *commonly* develop their positions with regard to the subject matter of interest (in this case the LIAISE Toolbox). Though structured in a relatively flexible way, Focus Group discussions are guided by a moderator who sets the topic(s) and challenges the participants to engage in a fact- or position finding exercise. According to literature, smaller groups and those with a narrower range of characteristics tend to be more coherent and interactive. In order to meet the latter requirement, we decided to organise two different types of Focus Group discussion, namely for policy makers on the one hand and researchers/modellers on the other hand. Another line of distinction has been the national vs. the European level (Bohnsack 1997; Lamnek 2005).

In comparison to other methods such as the questionnaires and web-based assessments, Focus Group meetings are qualitative methods that have been especially designed to explore and discover unexpected dimensions of a research topic. Furthermore, qualitative research allows to understand the reasoning behind specific behaviour or preferences. While also Focus Groups require well-prepared questions, the approach offers relative freedom to the group dynamics between the participants when carrying on a conversation. 'Focus Groups are one of the few forms of information acquisition where the organisers can learn a lot without really knowing what questions they exactly want to raise' (EEA 2001). Rather than 'mimicking' another questionnaire approach in a live setting, Focus Groups can explore a wider range of user preferences and requirements than strictly technical and procedural issues of Toolbox interaction. Considering that we are interested in user feedback by two distinctive groups - namely IA policy experts on the one hand, and IA researchers on the other hand - we developed two separate research agendas for these meetings. This is mainly because the motivation to use the Toolbox are expected to differ substantially between policy makers and researchers. While policy makers are expected to require information to help them preparing or implementing concrete IAs, researchers will be interested to link up with other researchers and their tools, profile their own tools towards the research community and policy makers as well as searching for practical scientific support when undertaking IAs that require expertise and knowledge beyond their own capacities. Nevertheless, we also envision a set of common procedures and characteristics for both the policy and the research focus group meetings.

LIAISE Focus Group discussions have been organised during Spring 2012 with the following groups:

Researchers

- Alterra, Wageningen, 1.2.2012, 7 participants, 1 Toolbox-team member
- ZALF, Müncheberg, 6.2.2012, 10 participants, 3 Toolbox-team members

Researchers & Policy Experts

- Leibnitz-Society (SIA Working Group) Berlin, 24.2.2012, 8 participants, 3 Toolbox-team members

IA policy experts

- European Commission, Brussels, 20.3.2012, 5 participants, 2 Toolbox-team members
- Estonian government, Tallinn, 19.4.2012, 8 participants, 1 Toolbox-team member

The Focus Group has been laid out for approximately two hours of discussion and was structured along 5 – 7 leading questions which addressed the toolbox' main components such as the models, the methods, the experts, the impact areas, examples of good practice as well as general aspects of the user-interface. The Focus Groups fulfilled the expectation of receiving more detailed and differentiated insights into user attitudes and preferences. The general feed-back to the LIAISE Toolbox has been positive with high interest in both models as well as methods. At the same time we received numerous suggestions for improving search options and the use of taxonomies in the beta-version. The full protocols and key messages are attached to this deliverable.

Web Analytics

Making use of web analytical data allows to assess the user-specific information that are gathered automatically and anonymously among visitors (Gonsalves and Romasco 2008) – in this case of the LIAISE toolbox alpha version that has been running since August 2011. It should be kept in mind, however, that access to the prototype webpage has been a password-restricted and that the knowledge of and the invitation the LIAISE toolbox has been limited to a relatively small group of experts in the field of impact assessment. This group comprises mainly the partners of the LIAISE consortium, the about 200 addressees of the questionnaire (see point 1.2) and of the about 100 invited individuals of focus group sessions (see point 1.3). In total 430 persons made about 800 visits to the prototype webpage and undertook 3000 activities between August 2011 and April 2012. The web analytical data has been gathered and offered interesting insights to user preferences and behaviour.

2.2 Findings

While the questionnaire and web analytics allowed certain statistical evaluations, we opted to cross-analyse all results to arrive at an overview of the key issues that have been addressed in both the focus group sessions and the questionnaire. Since the main objective for undertaking the user feedback analysis has been the interest to receive targeted input for developing the beta-version, a detailed quantitative analysis of the data was not considered as appropriate. Instead, a more straightforward summary of the results has been developed by selecting relevant information from the session notes (see Annex) and compare these with the results of the questionnaire and web analytics. The following sections are structured along the main components of the LIAISE Toolbox and summarise the results of all three user feedback assessment methods, thus questionnaire, focus group sessions and web analytics. Please note that the reported statements are not necessarily shared by all respondents or with the LIAISE team. In some cases, the conclusions for future Toolbox development are not straightforward and have to be carefully considered.

Taxonomies and Search Functions

State of the Art Search Engine

During the Focus Group sessions, several participants expressed their appreciation for the search engine qualities of the Toolbox. They especially liked the faceted search approach since this was offering a large degree of transparency and flexibility.

Taxonomies for Meta Description are highly appreciated

In general, the role and contents of the taxonomies have been considered as useful, especially because they establish a recognizable and clearly defined code that allows to manage complexity and to facilitate communications between different users, i.e. policy makers and researchers.

Demand for additional taxonomies which should be visible and searchable (e.g. spatial and sectoral resolution)

However, there was also frequent recognition that the existing taxonomies can only reflect a certain status quo and that the “moving windows” of IA are likely to require new or adjusted taxonomies as IA research and policies keep developing. Examples are the spatial resolution which is currently confined to the national level. It can be imagined that the hierarchical NUTS-region code could be introduced, or that non-administrative spatial boundaries such as landscape typologies or river drainage basis become an asset for spatial classifications.

Taxonomies represent only limited set of use cases (e.g. risk assessments, resource policies)

The existing taxonomies represent more or less those initial use cases that reflect a relatively small sample of policies.

Ambiguity of no-data in fields with taxonomies

When initiating the process of validating existing and adding even new datasets during the development phase of the toolbox alpha-version, experts have entered own key-words and phrases into fields which did not match the taxonomies that are being offered. During the development phase, such entries have been considered as valuable since they have helped us to critically review the taxonomies. Occasionally these entries indicated that existing taxonomies were not appropriate or missed essential dimensions of an IA issues. In other cases, however, experts came up with entries for which existing taxonomies offered adequate terms. In order to make the beta-version function properly, inconsistencies deriving from this entry process need to be resolved, this means that terms outside the developed taxonomies need to be eliminated and taxonomies properly updated to allow user-friendly future entries. However, it is predictable that new terms and phrases will be put forward by experts and that taxonomies need to be adapted over time. This will be one of the tasks of the specialised toolbox editors.

Models

Meta description of models is appreciated

Since the beta-version offered only a rather short version of the full LIAISE Reference Model description (just 7 out of a total of more than 50 criteria) - participants were hence not familiar with the full reference model - a systematic comparison was not possible and because of timely constraints also not desirable. Nevertheless, discussions revolved around the question whether the fields selected for the beta-versions' shortlist were appropriate. Most participants felt that the selection was adequate and that standard meta descriptions of models are in general helpful since they make models comparable and allow more rapid orientation. Scientists frequently emphasized their interest to include input and output data in the short list.

Most frequently visited section of the toolbox

Web-statistics demonstrate that the model database remains the most frequently visited section of the toolbox. This result was not entirely predictable since the homepage design of the beta version treats the different sections (experts, good practice, etc) as rather equal entities. Though 'models' are listed first, they do not stand out and data entries for other sections are equally well developed. Of course, the name 'toolbox' and the introduction text on the first page underline that fact that 'tools' are taking a central position. On the other hand, users would probably not visit the model section as frequently if there would not be a clear demand. In this way, we take the (relative) high number of visits as an indication that the information that is being offered is meeting general expectations

Importance

See above.

Full representation of the reference model (ca. 50 criteria) is unlikely to be used

As mentioned earlier, the representation of the reference model has been a point of discussion throughout most focus group sessions. Though models are of central interest for most users, this does not mean that they would like to review a very extensive list of descriptive criteria. In fact, the full list of 50+ criteria of the reference model is considered by many users as too complex and not matching the type of interest of the average toolbox user. During the focus group session with representatives of the European Commission (see Annex) the following key message stands out: *“Beyond the current short model profiles of the Toolbox Prototype and the demand for more descriptive materials and model runs (e.g. PDFs with result illustrations), there is no need for specific hands-on interfaces that allow officers to “play” with data. This is because of the black-box problem, the out-datedness of many of such tools and the time this would take”.*

Demand for sample outputs

This has been one of the more frequent and common comments throughout the different focus group sessions. The lack of visual illustrations for model outputs such as graphs, maps, tables and possibly animations, was considered as a weak point. It was argued that the fragmented and sometimes abstract nature of text descriptions in combination with pre-defined taxonomies and technical jargon did not always allow to grasp what a model is actually doing. Though sample outputs cannot replace important technical data on models, there was general consensus that illustrations can provide valuable complimentary information. With the help of visual output materials (e.g. in the form of pdf-files) even individuals with no or only little technical training in modelling science are able to rapidly recognize some of its principle capacities and to decide – e.g. from a policy perspective – whether such outputs are likely to be useful or not. In this way, sample outputs must be considered as more than support information, but as being of essential value for the selection of tools.

However, it was also made clear – at least by the users of the European Commission – that outputs should be limited to finalized products such as graphs, tables and maps and not include software applications for querying databases or even producing scenarios. The key message here reads like this: *Beyond the current short model profiles of the Toolbox Prototype and the demand for more descriptive materials on models (e.g. PDFs with result illustrations), there is no need for specific hands-on interfaces that allow officers to “play” with data. It is considered as rather unlikely that officers will gather the necessary technical skill to query and analyze data, that data may be outdated and that such direct access to data would take too much time (see Annex)*

Direct access to models is requested, but scepticism among researcher

Related to the accessibility of data, the question to direct access to models was discussed in several focus group sessions. In fact, a considerable number of focus group participants expressed their disappointment that they did not have this possibility, arguing that the

concept of a toolbox would suggest such a direct access. When they found out that only meta-data and descriptions are being provided, some even said that the notion of a toolbox raises false expectations. On the other hand, researchers felt that providing full access to the models they have developed did not appear as adequate, because applications require a certain insider-knowledge and because a model could be applied for the wrong purpose with negative results for both users and developers alike. Most researchers felt more comfortable with providing access only on demand and after there has been a certain form of exchange between model owner and model user.

Issues of data availability and usability

Here the focus group discussions mirrored rather accurately some of the key messages of Olga Ivanova's contribution during an earlier LIAISE workshop at the European Commission on IA tools for resource efficiency (October 17th, 2011). She had stressed that inconsistencies of databases are a major problem for putting models together, arguing that differences in data availability, actuality and quality play a key role that affects the results and policy relevance of modelling. "Official" datasets are not always the best but should be used for the sake of credibility (difficulty is that each group of stakeholders might have different sets of "official" data). In the discussion it was stressed that raising awareness to this problem was important. E.g. socio-economic data deriving from Eurostat as well as EEA products such as CORINE Land Cover or the various species atlas data projects guided by the European Topic Centre for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity are cases in point. All of these data sets have inconsistencies, gaps and scale- or method-related weaknesses. However, rather both simply rejecting such data sets as well as considering them a close to truth must be considered as inadequate. In combination with solid expert knowledge, European data must be considered as utmost valuable for Impact Assessment and other scientific work. The integration or development of meta data and ontologies describing data sets will be considered as an option for future improvements of the toolbox.

Quality criteria: No single criteria possible

While there was substantial interest in judging the quality of models there was also overall agreement that there are hardly any shortcuts towards measuring it. We are considering quality also as a result of the amount of information, the application and journal publication. There was agreement that there is not only one dimension in judging the quality of a tool, but that it depends on the application. Representatives of the European Commission felt that checking the quality of a model requires substantial resources and cannot be achieved by some random criteria check lists. Because of time and budget constraints the Commission decided against outsourcing quality control but rely largely on the work by JRC. However, they also stressed that they would restrain from publicly ranking or labeling models, e.g. as an input to the toolbox user interface. The same holds true for most researchers who do not feel comfortable with judging the work of colleagues.

Interest in information about linking models (not readily available now)

There have been several occasions when an interest in linking models has been clearly voiced. Several contributions during the ZALF researcher Focus Group Session (see Annex 3.2) emphasized the interest in receiving information on tool-linkage capacities. One important piece of information that requires attention is the matter of linking different scales.

Other Databases

Good Practices:

Importance

According to the questionnaire, the importance of the database 'Good Practice' was ranked on the second place directly following 'models' (See Annex). During the focus group session with representatives from the Estonian government it has been stated that the good practice database "could be a very good place where to share good practices". When searching the database, the experts expressed their desire to "go deeper into the studies or the interest in longer descriptions how studies had been done.

Confusion about the criteria to be considered as good practices

The key source of information for the Good Practice Database is the „Revision of the good practices inventory in the Commission web portal IA TOOLS" (TEP 2009). The assessment categories that are taken up – in reference to the key analytical steps in the EC's IA Guidelines from 2009 – include Problem Identification, Objective Definition, Development of Policy Options, Impact Analysis, Comparison of Options, Monitoring and Evaluation, Stakeholder Consultation. However, in the focus group discussions it was commented that only specific components of the compiled projects can be considered to serve as good practice – not the whole project. Regarding the value and reliability of this database it was decided that there needs to be a disclaimer that their selection is not based on quality criteria. Because the term 'good practice' is ultimately misleading in this respect, we decided to abandon it and to replace it with "IA Practice" which is more neutral. In order to allow discriminating between the good practices on IA activity and the generic cases of IA description, a specific entry field should be offered: in case it is marked as "yes" (= serves also as good practice) by means of convention, the field description/evaluation should provide an explanation on this.

Better integration of model use in Good Practices is demanded

In the good practice section of the alpha version, models did not play a very prominent role for the selection of examples and in the way the search could be conducted. In order to strengthen the model-related dimension it was proposed to enter the names of models which have been used and to describe the way they have been used in a more systematic fashion.

Experts:

Importance

Within a list of three databases, experts has taken the third place. However, the expert database follows both models and good practice very closely (only 1 point behind models). See Annex.

Criteria who qualifies as expert is unclear Users found that the selection and formal recognition of experts must be considered a sensitive issue: selection criteria are not clear and explaining why some people are not considered as experts in the context of the LIAISE Toolbox is not considered easy.

One other comment that we encountered in several focus group sessions was that the area of expertise (political science, economy) are too generic and that specific competencies – also contributions within certain projects - could be described more exactly, is not enough. Expertise could be linked to several things, e.g. to models, modelling techniques.

Background Information

Impact Areas

Importance

Impact Areas have been rated second in terms of its overall importance (after IA Methods) as well as the second most important taxonomic search criteria for all three data bases (see Annex). The latter must be considered as one of the most significant findings of the user feedback assessment endorsing its critical role in the toolbox. Like IA Methods, Impact Areas comprise rather extensive descriptive text materials split up in various sub-criteria, including sets of Guiding Questions which are supposed to facilitate the decision-making process when selecting Impact Areas. However, both the questionnaire and the web-statistical data do not allow to assess to which degree users actually accessed the broad scope of information that is being offered or whether they considered the Impact Area main terms already as sufficient indications. Representatives for the European Commission stated that “*Impact Areas are not used in a systematic fashion. Intuition plays a strong role and there is a lot of input from internal services to point at certain priorities.*” (see Annex). Here we see need for further investigations.

Useful, but fears that the information become quickly outdated Since the text materials thrive to cover the state-of-the-art in terms of research and policy development for each of the Impact Areas, we anticipated that the respective sections will require periodic reviewing and updating. It was also noted that the current version does not live up to everybody’s expectations. E.g. policy representatives from the Estonian government when testing the toolbox for good practice data base found that the “search did not result in good practice examples related to their topic (social issues) but to environment, population forecast, etc.” However, when being asked whether individuals could imagine to take the role of an Impact Area editor, we encountered some reservations, pointing at the

likely work load and at the necessity of offering clear rewards for such a role.

German impact areas not used

In order to adapt the toolbox also for national IAs, information on the requirements and the context are required. National guidelines for IA prefer other impact areas, indicators, processes, methods, etc. In order to test how this could be integrated in the toolbox, the German impact areas for the Sustainability Impact Assessment were integrated in the toolbox. However, both the national as well as the European participants at the Focus Group sessions did not see large merits in the inclusion of such national datasets. While the representatives from the European Commission felt that we should focus on our core business, namely European IA processes, German participants among the Leibniz Working Group (see Annex) argued that most German policy makers are not likely to make use of the Toolbox due to the inherent complexity of the subject matter. Most of them would lack scientific knowledge and methodological confidence to properly search and judge models. They would always rely on specialized staff and working groups.

IA Methods Importance

In comparison to previous search machines, IA Methods had been introduced to compliment IA Models as an integral component of tools. The reasoning behind this decision was the need for an adequate representation of qualitative methods as part of the IA process, but also of the full range of assessment methods which are either not or only conceptually integrated into models. It is hence interesting to acknowledge that IA Methods received very positive user feedback. While IA Methods score relatively high in the questionnaire – the verbal feedback we received during the focus group session has been even more clear in this respect. The policy makers from Estonia rated the importance of IA Methods as highest.

Difficult for searching

As in the case of Impact Areas, IA Methods provide substantial text materials in a highly structured format which is not always easy to access or navigate through. Participants expressed the desire to make use of this information in more practical ways, e.g. gaining insights how such methods are used in combination with or as parts of the modeling approach. A representative of the European Commission stated that: *“I liked very much what you have put into the methods. Show some concrete cases for their application... tell us where we have to be careful, what has been successfully applied where... etc.”*, the latter pointing at the need to further improve its scoping and linking possibilities (see below).

User-generated Content and Communication

Quality criteria and comments: sceptical, review process needed

Participants, representatives from both the policy as well as the research fields, expressed clear reservations with regard to their own active

involvement in assigning quality labels. The main reasons that have been put forward are that quality assessments is closely linked to specific user needs, often defying generic judgments. But also the LIAISE experts don't feel comfortable in commenting on the quality of tools. Klaus Jacob: *"Quality is a difficult concept for us. We are very interdisciplinary. The peer review mechanism does not work easily this way. We are considering quality also as a result of the amount of information, the application and journal publications."* Therefore there is interest to receive input by the actual users, the researchers and policy experts in the field. However, instead of individually commenting on the quality of tools, there was clear support for organizing (peer) review processes. Alexandra Vakou from the European Commission (DG Environment) stated: *"I am a little bit skeptical [on providing quality statements as user-generated input]. If you asked me to judge a model that is being used for a project, I will be reluctant to answer this immediately. There is a difference between it has been used appropriately and the quality of the model as such. I would have to check with a colleague to find out whether there was also another solution. Sometimes it is about the actuality of the data (e.g. 2003 vs. 2008) which has an effect on the modeling results and usefulness. This colleague might have taken decisions."* And further: *"At our unit we organise peer reviews in order to be sure that the quality is good. We also use experts provided by RTD and employ them – though this is a politically contagious issue.... but who really can guarantee you that your contractor understands the model well. In every technical unit they have modelers now."*

Researchers would possibly take a role as editors

In order to keep the information such as for Impact Areas or Methods up-to-date, it was discussed whether researchers who are knowledgeable in a specific impact area and who are willing to guide and edit the content for a specific area, could take the role of special editors, The tasks would include approaching the wider scientific community and inviting contributions to the toolbox, namely:

- Review and periodically update the background information for the respective Impact Area (e.g. description, policy relevance);
- Motivate experts to (1) register in the expert database, and (2) to load up relevant models that are suitable for IA related to the respective Impact Area;
- Identify relevant studies and projects to be taken up in the respective Impact Area section.

With their contributions, the section editors would support policy makers and consultants identifying relevant knowledge, experts and models. This would entail a high quality and concise description, while at the same time inviting and presenting a wide diversity of relevant knowledge for the manifold purposes of Policy Impact Assessment. Rather than evaluating knowledge contents, the task is to ensure a high quality of the way knowledge is being *described*.

Participants reacted skeptical on the feasibility of such an editorial role, mainly due to work overload and unclear benefits.

Regular request for updating is appreciated

Forum software:

Scepticism if open forums will be used; Group software is more likely to be used

The reasons for considering discussion forums to be of potential interests for users was the likely need to periodically update the information on different toolbox items such as Impact Areas which should be based on a certain consensus, but also to gain insight on the experience with and perception of tools as a means of quality control. Regarding the latter, the questionnaire (see Annex) showed that there is a clearly pronounced interest in receiving user comments for the selection for tools. However, during the focus group meetings, researchers argued that there simply would not be enough feedback to achieve the critical mass necessary for being considered as representative and hence valid for quality assessments.

Also other contributions revealed more skeptical than supportive reactions. Though some researchers voiced a principle interest in exchanging information among colleagues, there was also a clear concern that any in-depth discussions in a Toolbox-based forum needs to happen in *protected* areas, because the vulnerability of exposing individuals to wider and largely anonymous audience. We also detected a difference between researchers and policy makers: policy makers argued that they are mainly interested in clear, factual information about IA (*solutions*), but not in a specialized discussion process among researchers – something they considered as being eventually too vague and unfocussed with regard to their own objectives.

In the focus group session with the European Commission, the question was raised “who would be allowed to participate in closed discussions”, pointing at the effectiveness and legitimacy of creating inside- and outside circles, the question who would be entitled to take such decisions and the perception of such an approach by IA experts not directly involved in such processes. Here a comment by Mrs. Vakrou highlighted some of the concerns: *“In forum discussions we would not unveil any information on contracting and procurement issues. The other question is how long will this take? A continuous discussion? Not many colleagues can engage in this.”* On the question whether she could imagine to determine the time and group herself, e.g. for examining questions regarding the willingness to pay for brown fields and to call in colleagues to discuss such questions, the answer was: *“Normally if we have urgency, than we work on it. It is rather unrealistic that we engage in such group discussions. Example: the bit on food prices, within a short time we had to produce a paper what will happen environmentally – and simultaneously there were rice riots in Vietnam, upheaval in Mexico, etc. For certain deadlines we do engage on short notice in such discussions – but not for data!”*

2.3 Conclusions

As programmed to do, the analysis of the user-feedback of the alpha-version resulted in a series of recommendations and measures to be implemented in the development of the beta version. The main objectives are as follows:

- Better representation of the IA Process
- Stronger integration of data and indicators
- Test of forum/group software to facilitate interaction
- Testing of assignments as editors
- Critical review of all taxonomies to achieve more consistency and searching abilities
- Achieving more flexibility in Meta Descriptions (publications as xml schemata), further evaluation of semantic web approaches
- Reconsideration of quality criteria: frequency of use, peer reviewed papers, multidimensional concept of usability, actuality and completeness of information

These changes and suggestions are stepwise implemented in the beta version of the toolbox.

3. Introduction to the Toolbox Beta Version

In its current version, the Toolbox Beta Version features 86 IA Models of which 46 are accessible through LIAISE project partners and of which the rest derives from the compilation of Cambridge Econometrics (2009). Furthermore it contains the description of 38 experts including examples of work (e.g. previous projects, models, etc.).

As compared to the alpha version of the toolbox, a main feature is the possibility for modellers and experts to add new models and to update and edit the information. For all modellers and experts user accounts have been set up and they received invitations to update the data which is displayed in the toolbox.

Besides the model inventory and the database of experts, the toolbox currently holds the following content:

- Descriptions and links to ca. 30 different methods and families of methods which can be applied in IA. This includes methods to support the scoping, data collection, scenario development and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, data presentation and visualisation and participation of stakeholder.
- Description of IA Activities: The IA process is described by its analytical steps, i.e. problem identification, objective definition, development of policy options, impact analysis, comparison of options, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder consultation. Each of the activities is linked to specific methods and examples of good practices.

- Impact Areas: Derived from the IA Guidelines of the European Commission, and complemented with an extensive collection of background information, ca. 30 different impact areas are described.

All content is described by a set of taxonomies. The terms in the taxonomies can be searched and the content (methods, models, experts, etc.) which is related to an individual term is displayed. Thereby, search across the different databases is possible.

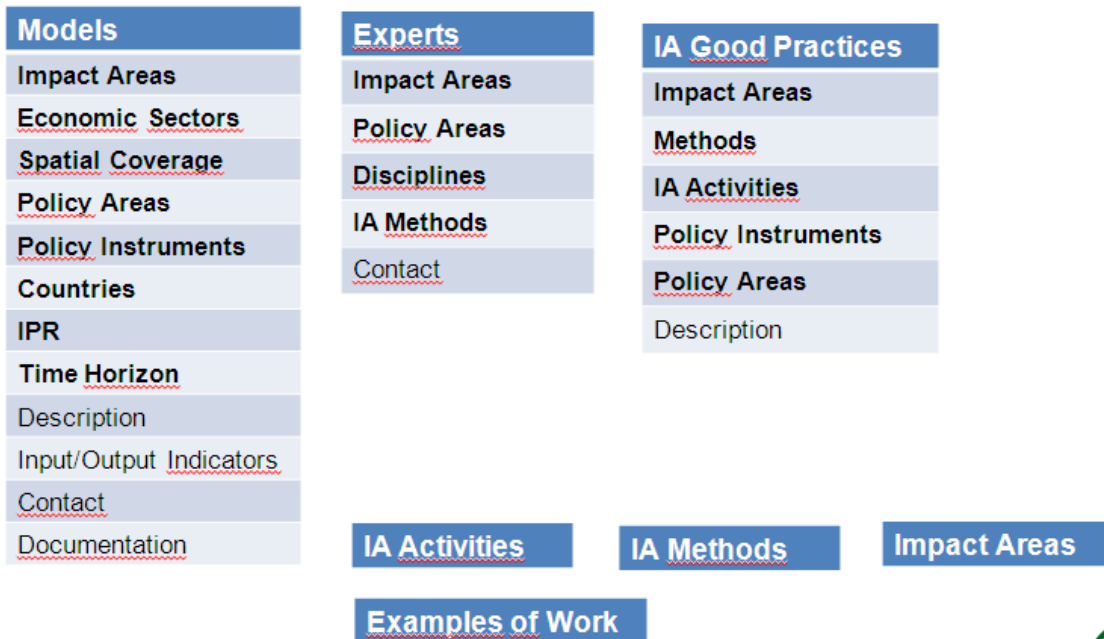
The component on national examples for Impact Areas – previously demonstrated for Germany – has been taken out in response to the user feedback analysis and the limitation of resources to systematically follow this up.

The value of the toolbox will consist mainly in the way information can be accessed, uploaded, combined, analysed and translated into a wider, meaningful context – before and during the IA is actually performed. Much emphasis has been given to enable access to adding and editing information. Accordingly, different user roles have been developed and the rights to read and to edit the content have been attributed. The following roles are most important in this context:

- Anonymous visitors: a registration is not required, all content can be read and searched.
- Editors: Need a registration and an approval of the registration. Editor can add and edit new experts or models
- Lead Editors: take over the responsibility over single impact areas or families of methods. They ensure the quality of the text, inviting new models and experts, adding new publications, data sources, etc.
- Taxonomy Manager: A taxonomy manager has the right to add and edit new terms to describe models, experts, etc.

The content of the toolbox is partially described along taxonomies, partially in free text format. The taxonomies reflect the specific items, however, as far as sensible, they are used across the different databases. For example, the taxonomy impact areas is used for models, experts and good practices, thereby allowing a search across the different databases. The following graph provides an overview on the meta descriptions for selected content.

Meta Descriptions



The content of the Beta Version of the toolbox is structured along the following main interest fields: (1) finding tools, (2) planning an IA, (3) support for IA, and (4) adding contents.

(1) Finding Tools

Model Database

This database consists of computer-based impact assessment models for mainly quantitative assessments for the expected policy effects for a variety of Impact Areas. The underlying structure for this database derives from the LIAISE Reference Model that has been developed in WP3 which also serves as the framework for entering new models. Each of the currently included 86 models is described by seven key parameters providing a brief profile for a first orientation. When the Beta Version is completed, taxonomies for searching models include: Impact Areas, Economic Sectors, IPR Model, Policy Area, Policy Instrument, Spatial Coverage and Time Horizon.

Method Database

This database offers a wide range of methods that can be used to gather, analyse and present evidence in an IA process. Beside of modelling the expected impacts, the different IA activities and the steps of an Impact Assessment process can be supported by a wide range of methods. For example, the consultation of stakeholders can be undertaken e.g. in surveys or in focus groups. Expert opinions can be gathered in qualitative scenarios

or in Delphi methods. The comparison of options can be achieved by a Cost Benefit Analysis or a Multi-criteria Decision Analysis. These are only few examples of methods which can be used in the course of an IA. Methods are organised in families of similar methods and they are classified according to the IA activities in which they may be applied.

The descriptions of the methods are constantly updated by a group of Lead editors.

(2) Planning an IA

IA Activities

There are many different guidelines offering support for planning and organising these steps. For the Toolbox, we have used the Guidelines for Impact Assessment of the European Commission for Impact Assessment to describe the process and the related activities. IA Activities are linked to IA Methods as these can be applied when implementing IA Activities.

Impact Area Database

The Database on possible Impact Areas is being derived from the EU IA Guidelines 2009 and from German Progress Report 2008. The guidelines address mainly the question *who* is going to be affected by a political measure – which societal, social or other type of group and contain three tables with breakdowns for social, economic and environmental *type of impacts*. Relevant sub-categories in this field are the ‘guiding questions’ (especially for users) and the associated impact indicators. In addition to the impact areas as developed there and the guiding questions, additional data is foreseen to provide background information on the respective impact areas. This includes a summary of relevant European policies and links to the respective DGs, as well as a description to relevant indicators and data sources that are collected by European or other official sources.

(3) Support for IA

Expert Database

The LIAISE Expert Database consists of the following criteria: Name of the Expert, Contact Detail, Department/Research Group, Organisation, Description Profession, *Disciplines*, Competence Area, *Economic Impacts*, *Environmental Impacts*, *Social Impacts*, *Policy Area*, *Countries/Regions*, IA Expertise, *Expertise in Modelling*, *Expertise in Thematic Foci of Modelling*, *Expertise in IA Methods*, *Specific Tools*, Example of Work (taxonomic fields are written in italics).

Good Practice Database

The good practice database aims to give guidance about the practice of IA. Toolbox users receive information on examples of good practice regarding different IA activities that are done in every IA, such as problem



definition, development of policy option, analysis of impacts or the comparison of the options' impacts. These activities represent the full cycle of an IA. The structure of the database is as follows: Next to basic information on the IA case (such as such as the IA title, the web link where to find the IA, the policy area), the database combines three important elements that will be searchable in the Toolbox, namely Impact Areas (split into economic, environmental and social impacts), models and methods used in an IA (coded as modelling technique, model's thematic focus and method), and the IA Activities. For each IA activity, an explanation is given why this IA is considered good practice regarding that activity, and the page number in the IA report that allows the user to comprehend the good practice in the particular IA case. The current version includes 98 examples of good practices from the TEP Report to JRC-IPTS (TEP 2009) and in addition to this, 47 examples of good practices which were coded from the most recent IAs (2010 and 2011).

Taxonomies

The taxonomies form crucial functional components of the LIAISE Toolbox since they provide standardised entry points for horizontal searches through the different (vertical) databases. Taxonomies include: policy areas, disciplines, jurisdictions where the IA took place/countries, IA Model Typology, IA Methods Typology, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), IA Activities, IA Model Technique, IA Model Thematic Focus, and Impact Areas (divided into three sub-categories : economic, environmental and social).

4. Design of the Toolbox

The following figures present some screenshots of the user surface of the Beta Version. Models can be searched by means of a faceted search. On the right hand side, the taxonomies which describe the models. Users can choose their keywords (one or several).

Toolbox Beta



Home > Finding tools

- Home
- ▼ Finding tools
 - Finding models
 - Finding methods
- ▼ Planning an IA
 - IA activities
 - Impact areas
- ▼ Support for IA
 - Finding experts
 - Good Practice
- ▶ Add your content
- Toolbox manual

Finding models

View Edit Outline Revisions

Last review by admin about 23 hours ago.

[Bookmark this](#)

Result list

88 models

ASSET_TSA

Description:
Environmental impacts of transport

Contact:
NERI

ASsessment of TRAnsport Strategies

Description:
The ASTRA model was built to provide analyses of the long-term impacts of the European common transport policy. The model can

- Facets
- Economic impacts
 - Environmental impacts
 - Social impacts
 - Economic Sectors
 - IPR
 - Time Horizon
 - Spatial Coverage

The presentation of the more text oriented content of the toolbox is organised in books. On the right hand of the window, the table of content is displayed, allowing a navigation through the respective book.

Toolbox Beta



Home > Support for IA

- Home
- ▼ Finding tools
 - Finding models
 - Finding methods
- ▼ Planning an IA
 - IA activities
 - Impact areas
- ▼ Support for IA
 - Finding experts
 - Good Practice
- ▶ Add your content
- Toolbox manual

Finding experts

View Edit Outline Revisions

Last review by admin about 3 weeks ago.

[Bookmark this](#)

Result list

38 experts

Adelle, Camilla

Contact:
Email: c.adelle@uea.ac.uk Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research,
School of Environmental Sciences, UEA, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK

Arampatzis, Stratos

Contact:
Tel 1: +30 2310276775
E-Mail: stratos.arampatzis@gmail.com
Address:
7 Baltadorou St
54631 Thessaloniki

- Facets
- Economic impacts
 - Environmental impacts
 - Social impacts
 - IA methods
 - Policy areas
 - Disciplines



Toolbox Beta

[Home](#) » [Impact Areas](#)

- [Home](#)
- ▼ [Finding tools](#)
 - [Finding models](#)
 - [Finding methods](#)
- ▼ [Planning an IA](#)
 - [IA activities](#)
 - [Impact areas](#)
- ▼ [Support for IA](#)
 - [Finding experts](#)
 - [Good Practice](#)
- ▶ [Add your content](#)
- [Toolbox manual](#)

Social Impacts

[View](#) [Edit](#) [Outline](#) [Revisions](#)Last review by [flu Studis](#) about 4 months ago.[Bookmark this](#)

- ▶ [Employment and labour markets](#)
- ▶ [Standards and rights related to job quality](#)
- ▶ [Social inclusion and protection of particular groups](#)
- ▶ [Gender equality, equality treatment and opportunities](#)
- ▶ [Individuals, private and family life, personal data](#)
- ▶ [Governance, participation, good administration, access to justice, media and ethics](#)
- ▶ [Public health and safety](#)
- ▶ [Crime, terrorism and security](#)
- ▶ [Access to and effects on social protection, health and educational systems](#)
- ▶ [Culture](#)
- ▶ [Social impacts in third countries](#)

[< Publications](#) [up](#) [Employment and labour markets >](#)[Add child page](#) [Printer-friendly version](#)

Index

- ▶ [Economic Impacts](#)
- ▼ [Social Impacts](#)
 - ▶ [Employment and labour markets](#)
 - ▶ [Standards and rights related to job quality](#)
 - ▶ [Social inclusion and protection of particular groups](#)
 - ▶ [Gender equality, equality treatment and opportunities](#)
 - ▶ [Individuals, private and family life, personal data](#)
 - ▶ [Governance, participation, good administration, access to justice, media and ethics](#)
 - ▶ [Public health and safety](#)
 - ▶ [Crime, terrorism and security](#)
 - ▶ [Access to and effects on social protection, health and educational systems](#)
 - ▶ [Culture](#)

The term search allows the identification of stocks of knowledge across the different databases (models, experts, good practices, etc.). The following example shows results for the search for “Climate”: it includes a documentation of the term from the Impact Area, practices, experts, models. Please note that the screenshot displays only part of the information.


Home

- Home
- ▼ Finding tools
 - Finding models
 - Finding methods
- ▼ Planning an IA
 - IA activities
 - Impact areas
- ▼ Support for IA
 - Finding experts
 - Good Practice
- ▶ Add your content
- Toolbox manual

The climate

Documentation for this term:

[The climate](#)

Claas Nendel
 Submitted by [Claas Nendel](#) on Tue, 2012-10-02 09:16 [Bookmark this](#)

Examples of Work [Read more](#)

The climate

Submitted by [ffu Studis](#) on Thu, 2012-07-26 09:12 [Bookmark this](#)

[Read more](#)

Tools for environmental impact assessment process - developing a tool ELA in Poland

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Mon, 2012-06-11 16:59 [Bookmark this](#)

[Read more](#)

Cross Compliance Assessment Tool (CCAT)

Submitted by [Anonymous \(not verified\)](#) on Mon, 2012-06-11 16:59

To add content, forms have been developed, the following screenshot gives the example of adding an expert:

[Home](#) » [Add content](#) » [Expert](#) » [Add content](#)

Create Expert

Name *

Contact

Organisation

Department

E Mail

Disciplines


- NATURAL SCIENCES
- ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
- MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES
- AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES
- SOCIAL SCIENCES
- HUMANITIES

Policy areas

- SECTORAL POLICIES
- ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES
- SOCIAL POLICIES

All searches in the toolbox can be bookmarked. Thereby, the user can collect different items which are relevant for his/her task. The following screenshot provides an example of bookmarks with IA methods, Good practices and an expert on Cost Benefit analysis.

[My account](#) [My bookmarks](#) [Log out](#)


Toolbox Beta

Home

Q

- Home
- ▼ Finding tools
 - Finding models
 - Finding methods
- ▼ Planning an IA
 - IA activities
 - Impact areas
- ▼ Support for IA
 - Finding experts
 - Good Practice
- ▶ Add your content
- Toolbox manual

My bookmarks

Type	Title	Ops
IA Cases	Conservation and Management of Sharks	Unbookmark this
IA Methods	Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)	Unbookmark this
Expert	Arampatzis, Stratos	Unbookmark this

5. References

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Jacob, K. and Hertin, J. (2007): 'Evaluating Integrated Impact Assessments – a conceptual framework', EPIGOV Paper No. 7, Ecologic – Institute for International and European Environmental Policy: Berlin.

The Evaluation Partnership (TEP) (2009): Revision of the good practices inventory in the Commission web portal IA TOOLS. Final Report, Commissioned by the EC, Richmond, UK.

Bohnsack, Ralf (1997): Gruppendiskussionsverfahren und Milieuforschung. Aus: Friebertshäuser, B.; Prengel, A. (Hrsg.): Handbuch Qualitative Forschungsmethoden in der Erziehungswissenschaft. Weinheim, München: Juventa. S. 492-501.



EEA 2001. Participatory integrated assessment methods. An assessment of their usefulness to the European Environmental Agency. Prepared by: Ferenc L. Toth. European Environmental Agency. 82 pages

Gonsalves, B. and Romasco. JJ. 2008. Human dynamics revealed through web analytics. Cornell University Library ([arXiv:0803.4018v2](https://arxiv.org/abs/0803.4018v2)), 7 pages.

Lamnek, Siegfried (2005): Gruppendiskussion. Theorie und Praxis. 2. überarbeitete Auflage. Weinheim: UTB. [Die erste Auflage von 1998 bei Beltz/PVU berücksichtigt noch nicht Bohnsacks Konzept kollektiver Orientierungsmuster.

Annex 1: Web Statistics Data

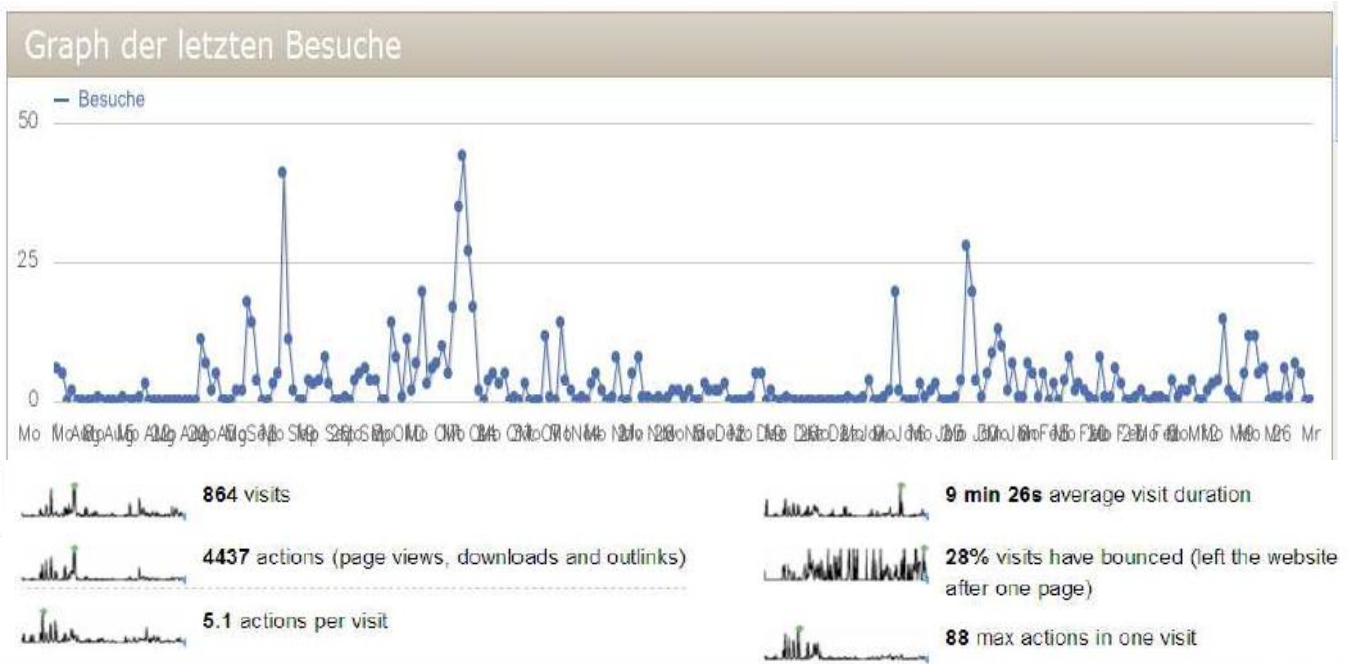


Fig. 1: Toolbox Visits between August 2011 and April 2012

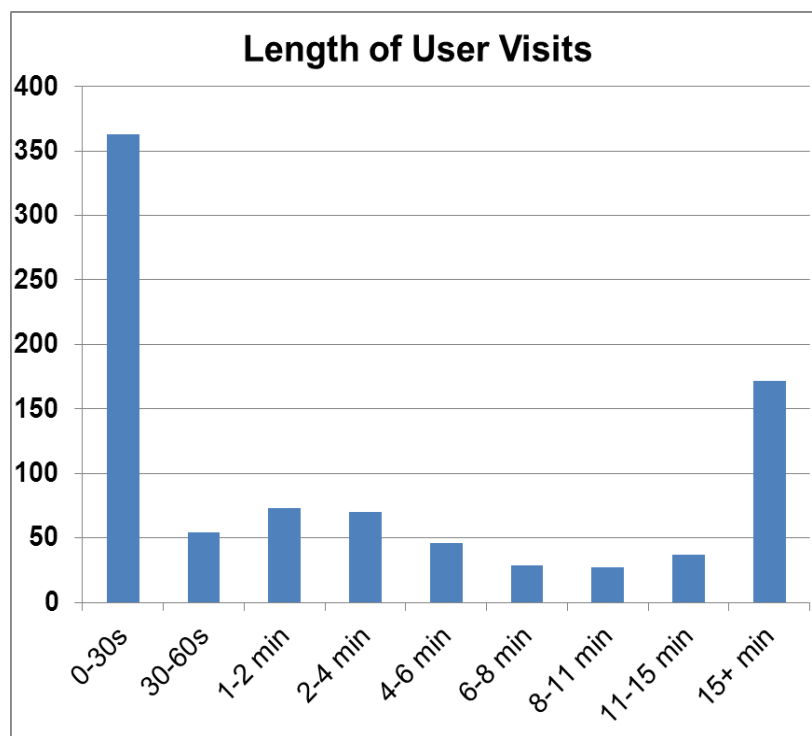


Fig. 2: Length of Toolbox Visits

Annex 2a: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for the LIAISE toolbox - Windows Internet Explorer

0% 100%

General

In your view, which kind of information should be in a toolbox to support impact assessment? The current version of the toolbox contains databases on models, on experts, good practices, and background information on impact areas (EU and Germany), on methods and on guidelines for IA in different countries.

Please rank the importance of the databases from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
Models	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good Practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rank the importance of the background information from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
Impact Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Methods for IA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Country information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In your view, what other content would be useful?

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
Literature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research Projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any further suggestions for content that would be useful?

Questionnaire for the LIAISE toolbox - Windows Internet Explorer

We describe the content of the databases by different taxonomies. The databases can be searched for by these keywords. We would like to know your view on the relevance of these taxonomies for selecting and searching in the data.

Please rank the importance of the taxonomies to search for the models from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
Impact Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thematic focus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Modeling Technique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other taxonomies would be useful to identify models?

Please rank the importance of the taxonomies to search for the experts.

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
Impact Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IA methods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Model expertise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Countries/regions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other taxonomies would be useful to identify experts?

Please rank the importance of the taxonomies to search for good practices.

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
Impact Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IA methods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IA entities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Policy Instrument	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Year	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What other taxonomies would be useful to identify examples of good practices?

Questionnaire for the LIAISE toolbox - Windows Internet Explorer

http://rnc2010.limequery.org/index.php

0% 100%

About your experiences
In the next version of the toolbox, we would like to include information on experiences with the content of the toolbox.

In your view, what would be important criteria to select models for an impact assessment? Please, rank the importance of the following criteria from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

	1 (not important)	2	3	4	5 (very important)	No answer
User comments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Ratings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Application in previous IA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Date of update	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

What other information would assist you in selecting models?

Would you be willing to share your experiences in comments or ratings?

	Yes	Uncertain	No	No answer
Comments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Ratings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Resume later Next >> Exit and clear survey

Start 2 Micr... 7 Micr... Postem... Quest... 2 Ado... 3 Int... DE Desktop durchsuchen 16:01

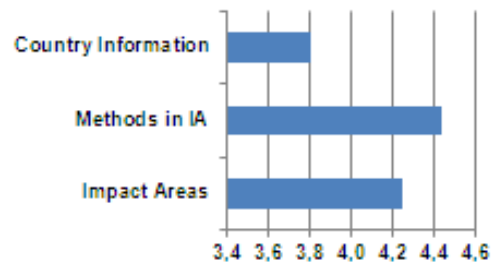
Annex 2b: Questionnaire data

Questionnaire results 1 (16 responses)

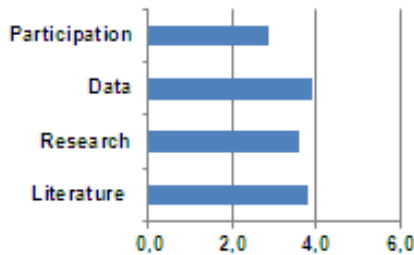
Importance of the Databases



Importance of the Background



Which other content would be useful?



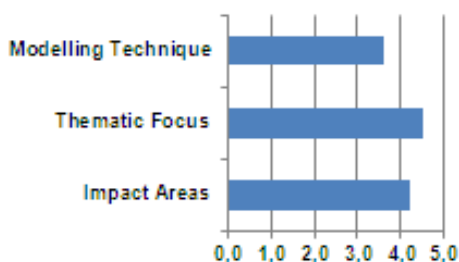
Suggestions:

Direct linking of methods to impact areas and good practices.
Segregation between expert & non-expert user
Underlying tagging criteria and a structured description of each item
Regular updates of literature and research projects
Website links to institutions
Glossary: explanation of important terms

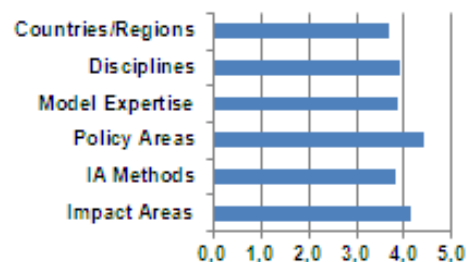


Questionnaire results 2 (16 responses)

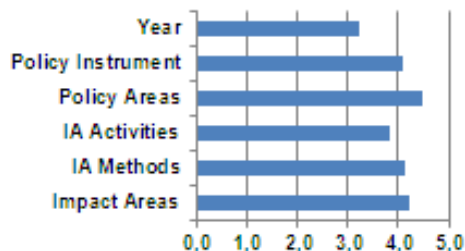
Taxonomy for identifying models



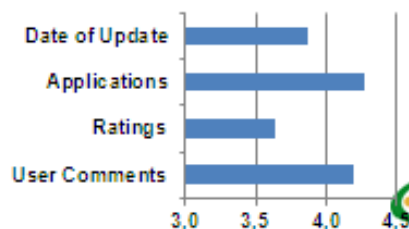
Taxonomy for identifying experts



Taxonomy for identifying good practice



Important criteria to select models



Annex 3.1: Focus Group Key Messages (AGSIA)

Workshop LIAISE Toolbox

In the framework of a common meeting of the working group for Sustainability Impact Assessment (AG SIA) at Leibniz-AK Sustainability

Date: Friday, 24.2.2012

Place: Leibniz-Geschäftsstelle, <http://www.wgl.de/?nid=anfber&nidap=&print=0>
Chausseestraße 111, 10115 Berlin

Participants:

Udo Riege (UR), Gesis
Marion Glaser (MG), ZMT
Frank Pothen (FP), ZEW
Klaus Rennings (KR), ZEW
Karsten Rusche (KaR), ILS
Peter Müller (PM), ARL
Peter Kasprzak (PK), IGB
Axel Piesker (AP), FÖV
Aranka Podhora (ArP) (ZALF)

LIAISE: Klaus Jacob, FFU (KJ), Dirk Wascher, FFU (DW), Katharina Diehl, ZALF (KD)

Ziel des Workshops ist es, die Möglichkeiten und den Nutzen herauszuarbeiten, den die LIAISE tool box für die tool-Wissenschaftler/innen der Leibniz-Institute haben könnte. Dabei werden die Stärken und Schwächen der LIAISE tool box allgemein und speziell im Hinblick auf Leibniz-tools diskutiert. Dabei sollen Informationen gesammelt werden, um die abschließend den Nutzen einer möglichen Leibniz SIA tool box zu diskutieren.

Die Leibniz-Gemeinschaft vereint 86 Einrichtungen, die anwendungsbezogene Grundlagenforschung betreiben und wissenschaftliche Infrastruktur bereitstellen. Insgesamt beschäftigen die Leibniz-Einrichtungen rund 16.800 Menschen – darunter 7.800 Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler – bei einem Jahresetat von insgesamt knapp 1,4 Milliarden Euro. Die Leibniz-Gemeinschaft zeichnet sich durch die Vielfalt der in den Einrichtungen bearbeiteten Themen und Disziplinen aus, welche insbesondere den Brückenschlag zwischen den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften und den Natur-, Lebens- und Ingenieurwissenschaften ermöglichen. Die Forschungsmuseen der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft bewahren und erforschen das natürliche und kulturelle Erbe. Darüber hinaus sind sie Schaufenster der Forschung, Orte des Lernens und der Faszination für die Wissenschaft.

Kernfragen des Workshops:

Einleitungsfrage: entspricht der erste Eindruck der Homepage der grundsätzlichen Erwartungshaltung im Sinne der angekündigten Toolbox?

- Wie könnten Ihre Expertise (= tools, Methoden etc.) optimal in der tool box dargestellt werden (bzw. was fehlt)?
- Welche Funktionen in der Toolbox wäre hilfreich für Ihre Expertise (Suchfunktion, Help Desk etc.)?
- Welche Aspekte von Intellectual Property Rights müssten in der tool box beachtet werden?
- Welche Art der Werbung für die tool box bei politischen Entscheidungsträger/innen und Wissenschaftler/innen wäre hilfreich für Ihre Expertise?
- Was ist Ihre Motivation, Ihre Expertise in die LIAISE tool box einzubinden? Ist eine Leibniz SIA tool box ein mögliches Produkt für die AG SIA?

16:00 Ende der Sitzung

Key Messages

1) General

- Homepage comes across as confusing. The LIAISE project should not be in the foreground. Language is rather technical, does not appeal to user.
- It might take too long to receive information as practitioner
- The navigation and search facilities come across as state-of-the-art and very efficient
- Introduction page to inform about the IA process would be certainly helpful
- German policy makers will probably not make use of the toolbox: too complex! There simply is not enough competence to deal with this level of sophistication
- Probably, policy makers will invite in the first instance an expert meeting and not immediately access the toolbox to get help
- A good entry would be to use the three classical phases of IA: planning, analysis and interpretation
- In order to make the toolbox successful there is need to offer a full-service for all aspects of IA

2) Models

- **IPR is more a science issue than a policy issue**

3) Good Practice

4) Experts

- Expert description: area of interest would be useful
- Projects are too general to serve as reference for experts – this needs more detail, examples of work would be better
- Selecting experts is difficult, hard to tell others that they are not experts as well

5) Impact Areas

6) Methods

7) Country Information

8) Help Desk / User Forum

9) Taxonomies

- The secret of participation is to represent the criteria of those whose input is requested
- Discussion on taxonomies > they should not become a straight jacket for finding things. Free text browsing is considered as a powerful way.

10) Forum Software

- Forum discussions are not really interesting for policy makers – they look for solutions and not discussions

11) Business Plan

- JRC's IA training sessions would be a good way of ensuring long-term maintenance
- Training is very efficient

Annex 3.2: Focus Group Key Messages (ZALF)

ZALF workshop: LIAISE Toolbox Test und Feedback

Date: Monday, 6.2., 13:30 – 16:00

Place: ZALF, LSD Meeting Room

Participants:

ZALF: Researchers whose tools have been listed: Hubert Jochheim, Hans Bachinger, Christian Kersebaum, Peter Zander, Ralf Wieland, Stefan Sieber, Carsten Gutzler, Annette Piorr

LIAISE: Klaus Jacob (KJ), Dirk Wascher (DW), Thomas Hüsing (TH), Pauline (FUB, Toolbox Development), Katharina Diehl (KD), Katharina Helming (KH) (ZALF)

Ziel des Workshops ist es, die Einsatz- und Nutzungsmöglichkeiten der LIAISE Toolbox auf der Basis der bestehenden Alpha-Version aus der Sicht der wissenschaftlichen Anwender – in diesem Fall den Tool-Experten des ZALF – zu testen und gemeinsam herauszuarbeiten. Dadurch sollen gezielte Hinweise zur Anpassungen bzw. Optimierung der Toolbox im Rahmen der bevorstehenden Entwicklung der Beta-Version, sowie Einsichten und Möglichkeiten praktischer Aspekte beim inhaltlichen Ausbau (*population*) der Toolbox-Datenbanken durch direkten Input seitens der Tool-Entwickler (*user-generated contents*) erworben werden. Um den kritisch-kreativen Austausch unter den Anwendern zu fördern, bildet eine moderierte Fokus-Gruppen Session den methodischen Kern des Workshops. Hierbei werden eine Reihe von Kernfragen gestellt, für die Anwender gemeinschaftlich diskutierte Vorschläge entwickeln.

Agenda

13:30 Einleitung

13:30 Klaus Jacob: das FP7 Network of Excellence LIAISE (Übersicht) und LIAISE Toolbox (front-office und back-office)

13:50 Kurze Vorstellungsrunde für ZALF-Kollegen mit Hinweisen zu eigenen Tools

Verständnisfragen zu Toolbox-Einführung

14:00 Fokus-Gruppen Session mit 6 Kernfragen (Moderator: Dirk Wascher)

1. Wie nehmen Sie die Einstiegsseiten der Prototypenversion wahr? Ist es das, was Sie erwarten? Was könnte anders sein?
2. Wie würden Sie nach einem tool suchen? Sind die angebotenen Suchwege hilfreich? Welche Ansprüche stellen Sie an ein Help Desk?
3. Was ist Ihre Motivation, Ihre tools in die LIAISE Toolbox einzubinden?
4. Wie könnten Ihre tools optimal in der Toolbox dargestellt werden? Was fehlt?
5. Wie bewerten Sie die angebotenen Hintergrundinformationen? Sind diese aus tool-Sicht relevant?
6. Welche Aspekte von Intellectual Property Rights müssten in der Toolbox beachtet werden?
7. Welche Art der Werbung für die Toolbox bei politischen Entscheidungsträger/innen und Wissenschaftler/innen wäre hilfreich für Ihre tools?

16:00 Ende der Sitzung

Key Messages

1) General

- The sequence of the entry options does not come across as logical; I think that Impact Areas is a relevant entry and the links to the experts should be strengthened (Z)
- Simplicity and efficiency of faceted navigation are much appreciated (Z)
- Different user access options are considered as useful, the user should have the possibility to judge him/herself whether one entries as expert or not (Z)
- I don't like the term "toolbox" because it suggests that one can access the tools directly – this leads to frustration (Z)

2) Models

- I miss the search option on assessment 'scales' which is really important to judge a model (Z)
- Model rating is not considered as appropriate (Z)
- Search filters should not be located on the left and right, but at one side only. (Z)
- User-controlled quality assessment will not work since there will simply not be enough users (Z)
- Uploading tools might lead to extra work – many people come with difficult questions – e.g. asking for source codes etc. (Z)
- Uploading meta-data is viewed very critically, but we certainly need input/output information (Z)
- Interesting would be to learn how long certain model adjustments would take. (Z)
- The key in using the toolbox is not the marginal improvement of an already good search facility, but to offer a large number of models (Z)
- It would be good to offer a scenario quickscan of the model and then opportunity to directly contact the modeler (Z)

3) Good Practice

4) Experts

- Selecting experts is difficult, hard to tell others that they are not experts as well (Z)

5) Impact Areas

- Hesitation to act as Impact Area editor because there are already many request to review papers etc. (Z)

6) Methods

7) Country Information

8) Help Desk / User Forum

9) Taxonomies

10) Forum Software

- Discussions in Forum needs to happen in protected areas, otherwise too vulnerable (Z)

11) Business Plan

- Propose to establish a link with Wikipedia (Z)
- Request all EU projects to offer a link to the toolbox (Z)

Annex 3.3: Focus Group Key Messages (Alterra)

Date: February 1st, 2012, 13:00 – 15:00

Location: Alterra, Wageningen

Participants:

Guests: Monical Commandeur, Sjerb de Vries, Martin Goosen, Anne van Doorn, Michiel van Eupen, Bas Pedroli (Alterra)

LIAISE Toolbox Team: Dirk Wascher, Onno Roosenschoon, Jacques Jansen

Results

- the first page, and especially the top line with the division into databases and background has been viewed rather critically – it is considered as too research-oriented. Background information should be presented less strongly, the notion of database and background are misleading.
- in presentation of tools (models) misses graphic displays. In general, there is too much text; results of model runs should be shown as illustration, e.g. 1-2 pages for each model
- quality criteria: upgrade, use, expert references; but also other reviews such as by RIKS Maastricht
- full text search should have a much more prominent place and cover the whole toolbox
- Helpdesk can't be replaced by a User Forum and should hence also not be called like this.
- The special policy areas of policy makers should be accessed directly – in general: put policy areas and instruments more centrally

Agenda

13:00 LIAISE front office and back office (Onno & Dirk)

13:15 Brief introduction of participants with regard to their tool interests

13:30 Focus-Group Session (Moderator: Dirk)

13:30 What additional (types of) content would be needed? What kind of search would be needed?

13:50 What kind of input you would be willing to give? How does this relate to your role(s)?

14:10 What kind of Quality criteria would be useful and relevant in your point of view?

14:30 What kind of help-desk would be useful for you?

14:50 Would you be willing and able to pay for the services provided by the toolbox?

15:10 End

Annex 3.4: Focus Group Key Messages (European Commission)

Date: March 29st, 2012, 14:30 – 16:15

Location: European Commission, DG ENV, BU5, Brussels

Participants

European Commission:

Alexandra Vakrou (AV), DG ENV
Karen Fabbri (KF), DG ENV
Audrey Moulhierac (AM), DG ENV
Marc Pirrung (MP), DG ENT
Paolo Pasimeni (PP), DG EMPL

LIAISE Team:

Klaus Jacob (KJ), FU Berlin
Dirk Wascher (DW), FU Berlin

Key Messages of the Meeting

1) General

- DG EMPL is cooperating closely with JRC as the Modeling Coordinator Task Force – directly attached to the Director General – to set up a similar inventory is being created for tools in social impact assessment following the SIA Guidelines.
- If the LIAISE network can be considered as valuable with respect to managing and offering access to tools, than because it has a proven record of successfully collaborating with the Commission services and/or can offer something that is very targeted to the needs (e.g. “bundling tools”)

2) Models

- It is right that the Toolbox does not grant full and broad access to all models since this holds the risk that it is not properly used and might lead to wrong results. However, depending on the case or model, it might be adequate to provide full access, or to distribute model runs.
- Beyond the current short model profiles of the Toolbox Prototype and the demand for more descriptive materials and model runs (e.g. PDFs with result illustrations), there is no need for specific hands-on interfaces that allow officers to “play” with data. This is because of the black-box problem, the out-datedness of many of such tools and the time this would take.
- There is clear skepticism regarding the role of Commission staff to actively comment on model experiences as a way of quality feedback. Such comments require internal feedback and clarifications on details, hence a process that is time consuming.
- Implementing even small changes in models to adapt them for a specific policy interest can be extremely time consuming and requires the full commitment of the IA staff. The decision to adapt models requires hence a solid decision making process to begin with.
- In social impact assessment modeling there is only very little outsourcing. The interest is to fully understand all model assumptions before selecting one or deciding how to adapt it. This should be done in-house.
- There is interest to have additional information with regard to what the model can be linked with and to provide adequate, well-founded specifications for this per model.
- The full data set of the reference model will not provide the type of detailed insights the Commission is interested in, or only partially. In order to offer detailed insights, it would be important to focus on a certain aspect of the model and to report on this.

3) Impact Areas

- Impact Areas are not used in a systematic fashion. Intuition plays a strong role and there is a lot of input from internal services to point at certain priorities.

4) Good Practices

- In the Good Practice examples, it would be good to name which models have been used and to describe the way they have been used in a more systematic fashion. Therefore consultant should be included and policy officers should be given the possibility to comment on the GPs.
- Regarding the value and reliability of the Good Practice examples, there needs to be a disclaimer that their selection is not based on quality criteria.

5) Background IA Processes

- Background Information on IA Processes is not necessarily expected.

6) Forum Software

- Regarding the user service of a discussion forum, there is little readiness to engage as policy officers. There is simply a lack of urgency for mobilizing communications for issues such as data and models. This is done differently.

Annex 3.5: Focus Group Key Messages (Estonian Ministries)

Policy-officers' focus group, Tallinn, Estonia

Date: April 19, 2012

Place: SEI Tallinn seminar room (Lai Str 34)

Agenda:

9.30–9.45 Introduction to LIAISE and objectives of the workshop. *Kaja Peterson, SEI Tallinn*

9.45–10.00 Introduction to the LAISE Toolbox. *Dirk Wascher, FUB*

10.00–11.30 Testing – Part I. The participants will have a possibility to ask questions on the use of the toolbox and share their experiences related to their specific work tasks

11.30–11.45 *Coffee break*

11.45–13.30 Testing – Part II. The participants will be asked to give their written feedback on the toolbox based on the questionnaire

Participants:

1. Juhani Lemmik, Government Office
2. Antero Habicht, Ministry of Justice; coordinating the RIA system, checking the IA quality
3. Tiina Annus, Ministry of Education and Research
4. Kaie Koskaru, Ministry of Finance
5. Hede Sinisaar, Ministry of Social Affairs, Head of Social Policy and Information Analysis Department
6. Mari Sepp, Ministry of Social Affairs, Social Policy and Information Analysis Department
7. Dirk Wascher, Free University of Berlin
8. Tea Nõmmann, SEI Tallinn
9. Piret Kuldna, SEI Tallinn
10. Kaja Peterson, SEI Tallinn

Key Messages of the Meeting

1) General

- Most of the cases are related to the environment. I didn't find exactly these things we have to analyse: social impacts on poverty, etc.
- The toolbox is very comprehensive. It takes a lot of time to digest and learn what the toolbox can be used for.
- The toolbox could be structured as the EC IA guidelines: by yes-no questions on impact areas (does it have impact on ...).
- Subcategories could be same in the search of each database – one framework for all databases, and then it is easier to find things.
- This is our daily work. According to our laws we have to assess the impact of policies and therefore we use our administrative data, survey data, order simulation models. We are a part of EU Commission's indicators subgroup and therefore we can have information about tools which are used at EU level.
- Toolbox should be organized so that one could browse it in a coherent and well-structured way by several categories (e.g. starting from policy area or impact area and model)
- policy area and EC IA Guidelines' questions are considered to be very useful for identifying tools
- Like a beta-version :-). Needs a lot of minor tweaking (e.g. layout), but also better categorization (e.g. overlapping categories in social impact area + better and more precise key-wording (e.g. not to receive as a result for searching social impact modelling, the models which deal with environment).

- The layout should be more user-friendly. The different information boxes (models, experts) should be more integrated with each other).

2) Models

- Tools should be directly related to the impact area.

3) Experts

- In the list of experts the areas of expertise and competencies could be described more exactly, general area (political science, economy) is not enough. Could be linked to several things, e.g. to models, modelling techniques.

4) Impact Areas

- We selected the impact area – social impacts, but we found that impact areas below in the list overlap.
- The search did not result in good practice examples related to our topic (social issues) but to environment, population forecast, etc. Under access to social protection there was a model of impact on flooding, which is not a direct impact in our case.
- The classification of the economic, environmental and social impact areas in the background info 'Impact Areas EU' and in the menu of the faceted search on the left hand side is different.

5) Good Practices

- The toolbox could be a very good place where to share good practices
- Case child protection: found only two related examples from the good practices by using a search term 'children', but the links direct to the European Commission's websites only. We would like to go deeper into the studies or there should be a longer description how the study was done.
- good practices could be related with other parts of the toolbox – links to the tools/methods that have been used in this good practice example, etc

6) Methods

- Is ranked very high regarding its importance.

7) Data

- Another thing is data availability in certain countries. If there are tools and data, but this data may not be available for Estonia. We cannot use the tool if the data for Estonia is not available

www.liaise-kit.eu



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