INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT AT THE SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE: GENERATING POLICY-RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE

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Background and Aims: The study explores which science-policy activities have been undertaken in the case studies of two EU consortium projects funded under the EU 6th Framework Programme: INTARESE (Integrated Assessment of Health Risks of Environmental Stressors in Europe) and HEIMTSA (Health and Environment Integrated Methodology and Toolbox for Scenario Assessment). If science and policy actors communicate throughout the assessment process, this is likely to lead to more policy-relevant assessments. This implies among other things that the assessment needs to be:

- specifically targeted to address relevant policy questions and stakeholder perspectives;
- discussed with relevant stakeholders;
- expressed in indicators that are adapted to the underlying policy question and target audience

Methods: A questionnaire on science-policy activities was distributed among 11 case study groups. Responses have been collected from seven groups: two HEIMTSA case studies (on noise and heavy metals), four INTARESE case studies (on water, waste, transport and agricultural land use) and the INTARESE-HEIMTSA common case study on health impacts of climate change policies in Europe.
Results: The findings indicate that the INTARESE and HEIMTSA case studies principally use a science-based approach. The studies did not extensively consider the three science-policy challenges, outlined above, for more openness in problem framing, participation during the assessment process and the policy relevance of the assessment outcomes.
Conclusions: limited science-policy activity
The case studies were set up, primarily, to test the INTARESE and HEIMTSA methodology, and were not intended to actively engage in the science-policy process. Partly because of the methodological and expert-oriented character of the case studies, they did not extensively consider the science-policy challenges. It would be interesting to explore science-policy activities in future assessments that are driven more profoundly by actual policy questions commissioned by policymakers.