

An Introductory Workshop on Integrated Environmental Health Impact Assessment

25 January 2011, Brussels, Belgium

There is, within science, a long and honourable tradition of risk assessment of environmental and other pollutants or risks to health - this is the topic of 2nd International Conference on Risk Assessment, organised by DG SANCO, in Brussels on January 26-28 2011.

INTARESE, HEIMTSA and 2-FUN are three collaborative research projects, funded by the EU (DG Research, FP6) which take this tradition of risk assessment an important step further. In order to support more fully the development of policy informed by scientific evidence, we have broadened our focus beyond risk assessment of pollutants, to develop a coherent framework of methods, tools and worked examples for predicting the full health environmental health impacts of policies and measures. We call this wider framework and methodology Integrated Environmental Health Impact Assessment (IEHIA).

IEHIA incorporates risk assessment but embeds it in a wider framework that

- considers how the policy question is framed,
- scopes the multiple pathways or chains by which the policy may affect health via changes to the environment,
- assesses the health impacts implied by each chain
- integrates that assessment across pollutants, sectors (e.g. agriculture, transport, energy, indoor environment etc.) and health endpoints

The three projects are nearing completion. We think, and DG SANCO agrees, that the methods, tools and worked examples they have been developing will be of interest to many of the delegates to the Risk Assessment Conference. So with the help and encouragement of DG SANCO, we are offering delegates, and others, a companion Introductory Workshop on Integrated Environmental Health Impact Assessment. This will take place on the preceding day, January 25, and will include:

- An introduction to IEHIA methodology and purpose, including its relationship to QRA;
- An illustration of how IEHIA works in practice, taking as a worked example a bundle of policies - affecting sectors such as energy, transport and agriculture, and a very wide range of environmental pollutants - which might be implemented to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Europe
- An introduction to the IEHIA integrated toolbox (IEHIAS) incorporating (i) a Guidance System for carrying out IEHIA, (ii) a Toolkit of stand-alone tools that we have developed or found useful, and (iii) an Integrated Computational System (IEHIACS) which we use for full analysis of policies and measures.