

# PRObing a method to Facilitate the Interactive Linking of Expert knowledge to Stakeholder assessment (PROFILES)

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## Context / Social problem

One of the cornerstones of the Climate changes Spatial Planning programme is the integration and communication of the knowledge gained during the programme. In recent decades, participative processes in 'integrated assessments' have attracted increasing interest. The PROFILES project starts from the observation that the quality of these participative processes can be greatly improved, particularly the evaluation of conflicting knowledge and ideas in integrated assessments. Stakeholders with different views and interests tend to want to reach a consensus and avoid any evaluation of conflicting opinions. It has also often proved difficult to bring scientific knowledge into the process in a way that enhances dialogue. Social stakeholders and scientific experts appear to use different arguments and lines of reasoning. Social stakeholders tend to focus on the feasibility of the options, whereas scientific experts usually talk about options in terms of models and scenarios – which often underlines the element of uncertainty when it comes to implementation. While social stakeholders are inclined towards taking decisions, scientific information is often presented in a way that does not directly support the process of policy-making.

## What is being studied?

The goal of the PROFILES project is to provide a sounder theoretical basis for participative methods and improve these methods to support dialogue processes within the BSIK CcSP programme. The PROFILES project concentrates mainly on methods and tools that use the available scientific information to provide structured and transparent support for evaluating conflicting lines of reasoning. The research question for the PROFILES project is: Which method is most suitable for structuring the interaction between scientific experts and social stakeholders so that the articulation and evaluating of

conflicting arguments in their 'integrated assessment' becomes a learning process? Various methods in various stages of the dialogue process were applied in a field experiment and compared.

## What are the results, and who are they for?

The project aims to bring about an improvement in methods for participative 'integrated assessments' often used in climate and environmental policy. The PROFILES project will make a methodological contribution to CcSP project ME04. The final deliverable will be a doctoral thesis. Several papers will also be published in international journals.

