

## 1. Publishable Summary

KNOSSOS, KNOWledge from Science to SOcieties, is a Seventh Framework Project (FP7), under contract number 244114, which addresses the gap between science and society in the field of environmental research with a focus on policy makers. KNOSSOS takes stock of available environmental research results in order to make it accessible to policy makers.

Knowledge-based policies are needed to effectively address the serious environmental issues that society now faces. While there is a plethora of European and international research being undertaken to address these concerns, there remains a gap between scientific discovery and policy that will put this knowledge to use. The challenges facing researchers and policy makers are complex and multiple. Access and understanding are the key issues here. Amongst the major obstacles are: the need to mediate and translate between the different languages of research and policy; the disconnection of scientific findings from policy results and the lack of recognition of scientists for policy success; and the need to align policy cycles and research cycles.

Policy and research cycles are often disconnected. On the one hand, policy makers may need information very quickly in order to react to a natural disaster or to pressure from civil society whereas researchers may require years to collect sufficient data and perform coherent analysis. On the other hand, when scientific research becomes available, it may not come at a time when policy is being developed (e.g. right after a new directive has already been approved). Rectifying this problem requires aligning the cycles between research and policy making; involving science in policy development and policy makers in the research process.

KNOSSOS seeks to address these issues by acting as a mediator between science and society. The goal is to make European and international environmental science not only understandable but also actionable and the preferred reference for those seeking information about and solutions to pressing environmental issues. An informed society will help inspire policy makers into action and high-quality research will be the foundation for sound policy decisions. KNOSSOS facilitates this process by fostering the **understanding** of key environmental issues, the **investigation** of possible solutions, and the **interpretation** of results into informed policy decisions.

**KNOSSOS** is a four-year project where the starting point is enhancing the communication between environmental research and policy makers. These communication channels are the basis for the development of further methods and tools to ensure knowledge exchange and uptake of EU-research results. The KNOSSOS project is a collaboration between four complementary partners. **GLOBE EU** and **GLOBE Europe**, are the “insiders” of the project. Composed of legislators and parliamentarians, they know the work of parliaments and their legislative cycles. **IEEP**, the Institute for European Environmental Policy, is the “translator”, effectively translating research into policy. Finally, **UNEP**, the United Nations Environment Programme, is the “facilitator”, bringing its global view and expertise on environmental science-policy interfaces.

### **Description of the work performed and main results so far**

The KNOSSOS project began in April 2010. This first periodic report underlines the key achievements made in the eighteen months following. As a first step, the KNOSSOS project has developed a procedure to navigate through the vast amount of available scientific research. To begin with, research was divided into four key policy areas: climate change, biodiversity, land and urban management, and natural resources management. From here, KNOSSOS developed ten criteria for evaluating and selecting the most policy-relevant Sixth and Seventh Framework Programme (FP6 and FP7) projects in these fields; all-together, 300 projects were analysed. The selection process screens for projects whose results have potential consequences on existing policies or require new policy action. It searches for projects with a broad, holistic approach; preferred projects are more likely to affect a larger number of policies and to be relevant to a higher number of EU countries. Relevant projects also look into issues that have not been previously documented or present new findings that change the public perception

of an issue. These are just some of the criteria used by KNOSSOS to select key research projects. Further details can be found in Annex 1.5 of the technical report. As the selection of projects is an ongoing process, suggestions for a revised set of criteria have been made and will be considered in the future.

While finding relevant research is key, a second, equally important step is finding policy issues likely to dominate the national political agenda in the field of environment in 2012. With the support of GLOBE EU and GLOBE Europe, KNOSSOS was able to identify the most important environmental issues in the European Parliament and also in national parliaments throughout Europe. For the former, resource efficiency and resource effectiveness, next-generation biofuels, and Rio+20 and the Green Economy were just some of the priority issues. For Italy and Spain, Greening the CAP and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and water resources management (droughts, flood management, waste water disposal) are priorities. France has targeted the measurement of climate change and the impact of GMOs on human health and biodiversity as some of their key issues. For the United Kingdom, Greening the Common Agricultural Policy and Greening the British Economy are priority interests. Finally, in Poland, the strategic focus is on the Carpathian region with an interest in social and ecological aspects of the mountain system and in the natural capital of the mountain system and forest management and protection. These are only a few of the current environmental policy priorities in the EU and in its member states. A more comprehensive list can be found in the work progress section of the technical report.

The KNOSSOS project's first phases involve identifying key research projects and priority policy areas. With the support of IEEP, KNOSSOS used the data collected from these processes to develop the first of its policy briefs. The topic of the brief is water scarcity – one of the priority policy areas identified by GLOBE Europe. Not only is water scarcity relevant in national parliaments, it also fits within the European Union's policy cycle with its Water Framework Directive and its "Blueprint for Safeguarding Europe's Water" in 2012. The brief underscores key research findings from relevant FP6 and FP7 projects identified in the screening process and translates these findings for policy makers. Not only does the brief outline the current state of water scarcity in Europe and globally, it also models future predictions based on the status quo and potential policy actions. For example, the brief underscores impact of continued and future water scarcity on agriculture and food security and on industry and the energy sector. From this, policy makers are able to better predict the results of their actions or inactions in the water management sector. The brief concludes by suggesting possible policy options that will have a positive effect on water management and the reduction of water scarcity in the future. KNOSSOS will continue to produce these policy briefs every three months for the duration of the project.

While policy briefs help to bridge the gap between researchers and policy makers by proposing research-based policy, dissemination of these briefs and of further KNOSSOS findings is equally important. The KNOSSOS project has developed a web platform with innovative tools to guarantee fast and easy access to relevant information including the latest policy briefs. Furthermore, this knowledge management system allows users to speak with and ask questions to environmental science and policy experts.

#### **Expected final results and impact and use (including socio-economic impact/implications)**

While the KNOSSOS project has taken the first step in aligning policy and research cycles through the publication of its first policy brief, a dissemination strategy is still required. One of the key strategies for ensuring that these briefs reach policy makers is by organising policy dialogues in the European and national parliaments. These events will bring together researchers and parliamentarians in order to open the communication channels between these two worlds and to discuss environmental policy options. Another approach for bringing science and society closer together is the appointment of Environmental Science Ambassadors. Scientists will be chosen on the basis of their research and on their ability to present their findings in an understandable way. They will be responsible for translating key information about environmental science and policy options to policy makers in the European and national parliaments throughout Europe.

Disseminating research findings is one of the key goals of the KNOSSOS project. However, the target goes beyond Europe. In future, the project will organise a number of "Knowledge Fairs" as side events of international conferences where the results of EU research projects will be presented alongside sound policy options. Furthermore, KNOSSOS will also include DG Research findings in the Online Access to Research in the Environment (OARE), one of the world's largest collections of Environmental Science Research.

The KNOSSOS project is expected to have an impact both in Europe and throughout the world. **In a global context**, the project will establish closer partnerships between European and African, Latin-American, Arab and Asian research. **In Europe**, KNOSSOS will intensify existing channels of information and knowledge exchange between scientific research and policy-making. It will also put the spotlight on European environmental science and research in the public debate. Based on the work performed thus far, the KNOSSOS project is on track for achieving these goals.

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