

SOCOPSE overview

The main objective of the project SOCOPSE, Source Control of Priority Substances in Europe, is to provide support and decision support tools for the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) regarding priority substances. In this project, eleven partners from seven European countries are involved in the development of a common approach and a Decision Support System (DSS), with associated data-bases and compiled information, to support the implementation of the WFD. The SOCOPSE project includes a number of activities focusing on material flow analyses, emissions and emission control options which have provided input to the DSS and a series of independent reports. The DSS and the associated guidelines have been tested and evaluated in five case studies in different regions of Europe.

MAIN RESULTS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

In this fact sheet, suggestions for future development of research initiatives and policy development are presented, based on the experiences from the project. The main results of the SOCOPSE project are available on the project website www.socopse.eu, including reports and a web based version of the DSS.

- **The implementation of the WFD will benefit from a continual development of decision support tools.** The WFD is a strong legislation aimed at improving water quality in Europe. The SOCOPSE project has revealed a number of gaps in knowledge as well as uncertainties in responsibilities related to the decision making in the WFD implementation. A continual development and adaptation of decision support tools such as the SOCOPSE DSS are necessary for a successful implementation of the WFD.

- **More transparency and openness of information is required.** The SOCOPSE activities on material flow analyses, emission source characterisation and source control options have highlighted the need for a larger degree of transparency and openness of information concerning production, use and emissions of chemicals. Although SOCOPSE has focused on a limited number of well-known chemical substances, the availability of information on these substances has been incomplete and associated with a high degree of uncertainty. For emerging substances, the situation is likely to be similar or worse. This lack of information prevents the assessment of the main flow paths and emission sources, and thus the assessment of risks and the development of cost efficient emission control strategies.

- **An integrated approach for chemicals is needed for future protection of the environment.** The WFD is developed as a legislation mainly focusing on the reduction of emissions from point sources to water located within individual water districts. Chemical pollution of water bodies is however in many cases also affected by other sources such as long-range atmospheric transport, historical contamination and diffuse pollution sources, for example from household products. To efficiently manage all emission sources an integrated approach involving other directives (REACH, directives on products, electronics and waste, etc.) and international conventions (CLRTAP, Stockholm Convention, HELCOM, OSPAR) is needed. As a first step, an integrated assessment of available information on sources, impacts and the main flow paths of chemicals should be made.



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