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Modelling Support To Improve The Quality Of Environmental Studies

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Sound decisions in environmental management are often based on modelling, performed by teams consisting of team members with multidisciplinary backgrounds and solving multidisciplinary problems.

Modelling in itself is a risky activity, in which many things can go wrong, including miscommunication within the team and between the team and the problem owner, malpractice, lack of process knowledge and a lack of documentation. This kind of problems makes modelling an obscure and arbitrary practice. The multidisciplinary character enhances the problem-solving scope of model studies, but does further increase the problems.

Projects that use methods and tools for multidisciplinary model-based problem solving should be based on a sound, explicit methodology, described in a clear definition of the whole modelling process. Such a definition can be used as guidance for the modelling team. This guidance should be filtered for the role of a team member and to the disciplinary characteristics of a project. Next to the guidance on what modelling teams have to do, records should be kept of what they actually do and why they do it in that way. Together, guidance and records, provide transparency of modelling projects, allow audits, improve quality and make model studies reconstructable.