



**Report of the SHEER Advisor Board Meeting  
May 7, 2015  
Krakow, Poland**

The SHale gas Exploration and Exploitation induced Risks (SHEER) project held its initial plenary meeting in Krakow, Poland on May 5-8, 2015. The goal of this HORIZON 2020 project is to “develop best practices for assessing and mitigating the environmental footprint of shale gas exploration and exploitation.” The meeting was attended by the project management, lead investigators, scientific and technical team members and the SHEER Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board provides the SHEER management with advice on the overall direction of the project, monitors progress in meeting milestones, and offers solutions to problems that it identifies or are referred to it by management. It also helps management disseminate results to stakeholders. Thus, its role is to assist rather than just review the SHEER project, and it was in this spirit that the first Advisory Board meeting was held on May 7, 2015.

The Board was particularly impressed by the comprehensive nature of the project with strong emphasis on gathering data from the two experimental sites in Poland and the United Kingdom. The breadth of the project’s eight work packages is also notable, covering assessment and monitoring of the critical environmental hazards associated with shale gas development and their integration into guidelines for best practices. There is also a healthy balance between the core scientific investigations of induced seismicity potential, groundwater and air pollution and the translation of scientific knowledge into products for other stakeholders and the public at large.

By assembling a team with a broad range of expertise, SHEER possesses the scientific and technical knowledge required to successfully carry-out each of the work packages. They appear to be achievable within the allotted time for the project, but some will be needed to start without delay. In particular, both the Board and SHEER management are well-aware of the importance of beginning baseline monitoring for groundwater, air quality and seismic activity before drilling operations commence.

It is expected that drilling will begin first in Poland, possibly as early the summer of 2015 with fracking of the well in the fall. The plans for establishing the monitoring systems this summer are ambitious and it is critical to the project that they are established without delay. The Board would like to be kept informed of progress in that regard. We

were less certain about the status of and plans for developing a comprehensive geological model of the site and environs. The value of an integrated model is obvious, and because some of the most important information resides in the hands of the oil company (well logs, geologic framework, seismic sections, etc.) establishing a data sharing agreement with them needs to be a high priority. We understand that data sharing arrangements with the operator in the United Kingdom are in place, including access to seismic data from the company's network.

Communication will be a major issue at many levels for a project of this complexity and scope. Internal communication within work packages does not appear to be a major concern at this time to the Board based on the robust discussions within those teams during the Krakow meeting. Communication across work plans and disciplines, however, will need to be nurtured and monitored by the project management, as success of the overall project will depend on the integration of many pieces. We strongly encourage the management team to focus on cross-project integration, beginning with a clearer definition of the intended audiences for the deliverables. In addition, the deliverables from WP7 and WP8 need better definition. This will help insure that each work package team delivers products that meet the needs of those work packages. For instance, how will monitoring be integrated in to hazard assessment? Will the project largely limit best-practice recommendations to hazard (a source of potential danger or harm) or will it include risk (chance of suffering loss or harm)? Clarifying the goals as well as the intended audiences will focus the work.

We also note the importance of staying abreast of other projects and programs that are also developing "best practices" for shale gas exploitation, including other HORIZON 2020 projects, national projects in EU countries such as the Netherlands, and overseas. The Board also noted the value of transparency during the operational phases of the project and importance of sharing project data and information with the stakeholders, including the operating companies and local government. SHEER, however, should not communicate directly with the public. This is the role of government and the companies. This is another reason why the project would benefit from a clear statement of the goals of the communication program to avoid any confusion or missteps in the future. The SHEER project has the potential to make a significant socio-economic and political impact, and it is vital that you communicate in appropriate language and disseminate findings through channels that will reach all stakeholders.