



Shale Gas Information Platform SHIP: the scientific perspective in all that hype

A. Hübner, B. Horsfield, and I. Kapp

GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences, Chemistry and Material Cycles, Potsdam, Germany
(huebner@gfz-potsdam.de)

With the Shale Gas Information Platform SHIP, the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences engages in the public discussion of technical and environmental issues related to shale gas exploration and production. Unconventional fossil fuels, already on stream in the USA, and now under rapid development globally, have brought about a fundamental change in energy resource distribution and energy politics. Among these resources, shale gas is currently most discussed, with the public perspective focusing on putative environmental risk rather than on potential benefits. As far as Europe's own shale gas resources are concerned, scientific and technological innovations will play key roles in defining the dimension of future shale gas production, but it is especially the public's perception and level of acceptance that will make or break shale gas in the near-term. However, opinions on environmental risks diverge strongly: risks are minor and controllable according to industry, while environmental groups often claim the opposite.

The Shale Gas Information Platform SHIP brings the perspective of science to the discussion on technical and environmental issues related to shale gas exploration and production. SHIP will not only showcase but discuss what is known and what is not yet known about environmental challenges and potential risks. SHIP features current scientific results and best practice approaches and builds on a network of international experts. The project is interactive and aims to spark discussion among all stakeholders.

The Shale Gas Information Platform SHIP covers basic information and news on shale gas, but at the heart of SHIP is the Knowledge Base, a collection of scientific reviews from international experts. The articles give an overview on the current state of knowledge on a certain topic including knowledge gaps, and put this into context of past experiences, current best practices, and opinions expressed by different stakeholders. The articles are open to public comments via the SHIP website, and will be reviewed every three months by the author(s). After approx. one year lifetime, the articles are compiled and published as an E-book by GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences (Library and Information Centre LIS of the GFZ). A DOI (Document Object Identifier) will be issued for every article (=book chapter). As the whole SHIP website, the E-book will be licensed with a Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-license, in order to promote maximum visibility and distribution in the web.