

OSIRIS is concerned with risk as a specific approach to situations involving possible damage and undesirable consequences stemming from the interplay of environment and human activities (natural and technological hazards, land-uses, environmental health).

Risks, and risk assessment and management, are conceptualized, debated and constantly revised in multiple arenas such as the political, the legal, the academic, and the professional. Besides, risk definitions, assessment and management involve different territorial and time scales - from the local to the global, in both short-term (crisis, disasters) and long-term perspectives (sustainability, climate change). In this sense, **OSIRIS** has an integrated approach to risk issues that takes into account the interconnectedness of the different arenas, space and time dimensions, and mobilizes knowledge from several domains thus transcending the disciplinary frontiers.

The way risks are conceptualized affects the practical approaches and the instruments called for dealing with the problems. **OSIRIS** aims to develop and promote a critical look on both risk concepts and instruments for assessment and management. Although focused on the Portuguese society, **OSIRIS** also promotes European and broader international networks, especially with semi-peripheric countries and those of the southern hemisphere, in particular countries having Portuguese as their official language.

Our objectives are established in the following domains:

-Research

Our specific goal is to conceive and conduct research projects that deepen the understanding of risk by:

- studying risk as a feature of undergoing processes of socio-economic transformation, with an emphasis on: (a) the changing nature of the State within the global dynamics of capitalism; (b) inequalities as sources of specific vulnerability to risk.
- building working platforms to (a) increase the collaboration among academics and professionals from distinct disciplinary and sectoral backgrounds in order to establish shared risk frameworks; (b) allow for the exchange of knowledge and experiences from different national contexts thus valuing the cultural dimension and the variety of approaches to risks; (c) design actions in close cooperation with public and private actors in order to identify and address gaps in the process of risks assessment and management.

-Public debate

Our specific goal is to consolidate **OSIRIS** as a Forum that may contribute to increase the quality of public debate by: calling the attention to risk situations and particular hazards which are currently underestimated; highlighting the dilemmas involved in risk definitions and policies thus stimulating the creative imagining of scenarios and means of action; fostering the expression of multiple points of view and types of knowledge in

order to enlarge the range of alternatives considered in the process of building compromises or compositions.

To effectively achieve these goals we aim at:

- observing and keeping track of the activities of social movements and emerging actors concerned with risk issues
- gathering data from different sources and organising it in databases and other information support systems open to public consultation
- disseminating the knowledge acquired through a variety of media formats and public events
- testing and implementing participatory tools for structuring debates.

-Public policies

Our specific goal is to foster integration of policies, public participation and accountability as main features of the process leading to the definition of policies addressing risk issues. These three features are crucial in all stages of the policy-making process: design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Risk issues should be addressed in different policy areas, from sustainable development and territorial planning to social cohesion and inequalities. Our contribution to a policy approach anchored on integration, participation and accountability is:

- building working platforms and developing participative procedures in close cooperation with policy-makers working at different territorial scales
- giving direct inputs to policy-making including
- recommendations streaming from research-action projects
- analysis of the design and underlying assumptions of existing policy instruments
- proofing the performance of the policy instruments available and suggesting new ones
- exploring methods to support the decision-making process

-Training

Our goal is to promote the transfer of the knowledge acquired during **OSIRIS** activities by:

- providing young researchers with a multidisciplinary and international learning environment, in which acquiring the integrated set of skills required in the field of risk sciences
- providing professionals and practitioners with innovative concepts and approaches developed in risk areas relevant to their field of expertise
- developing extension activities in close collaboration with schools in order to increase students awareness of natural and technological risks, in particular the ones their territory is vulnerable to.