

SPIRAL: Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity: Research, Action, and Learning

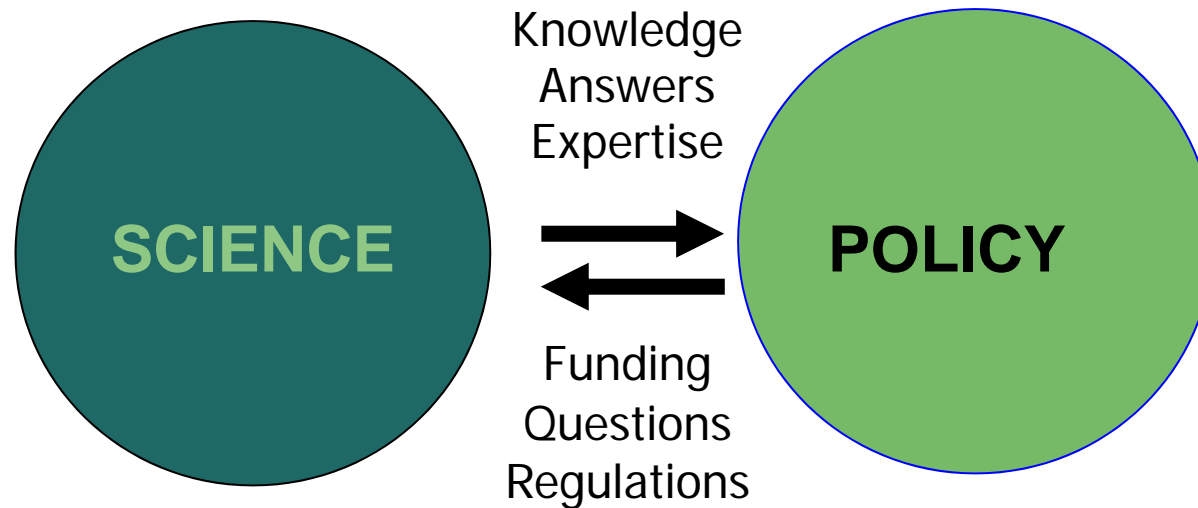
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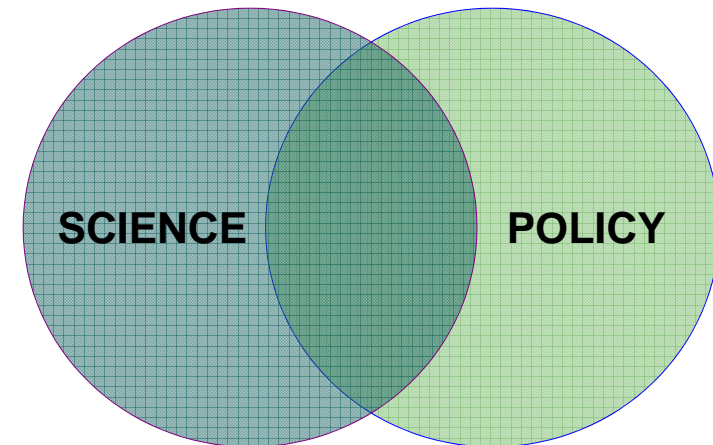
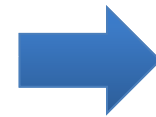
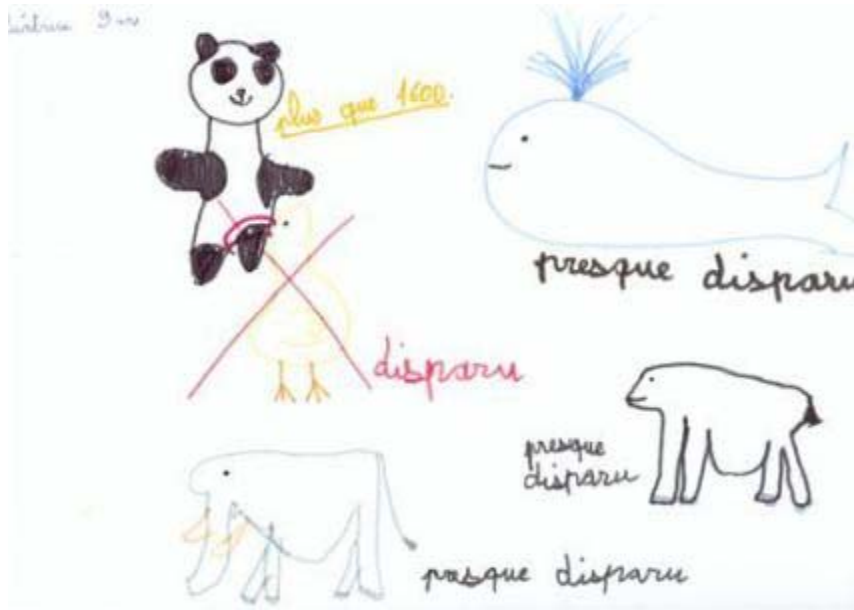
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Science-policy interfaces



Science-policy interfaces – the challenge



The intersection: ***science-policy interfaces***





SPIRAL: *Science-Policy Interfaces for Biodiversity: Research, Action and Learning*

- **Research** project:
 - Improve our knowledge and understanding of Science-Policy Interfaces for biodiversity
- **Action** project:
 - Contribute to designing or improving real-life science-policy interfaces: test cases, recommendations
 - Resource group



Challenges of multi-level SPIs

- Uncertainty, complexity, ignorance
- Lack of links, or difference, between disciplines and sectors – challenges of interdisciplinarity & trans-disciplinarity
- Divergent implicit norms, values and worldviews
- Limited incentives for increased interactions
- Multiplicity of existing SPIs



Mapping existing science-policy interfaces

Interfaces of specific projects or networks



Face to face communications

Scientific advisory bodies and councils



International or regional assessment processes



Subsidiary bodies



Interfaces with research policy



Strategic initiatives



A multiplicity of SPIs

- At local, national, regional and international levels;
 - Can be closer to the policy or to the scientific processes;
 - Can be formal and institutionalised, or informal and more flexible;
 - Many of them are intertwined or embedded in one another;
 - Operate at different stages of the policy process (early warning, issue identification, policy design, implementation, assessment, review)
- No 'one size fits all' ⇒ cherish diversity and build on existing interfaces to improve, link, complement, innovate.



Improving interfaces between EU research projects and policy-making

- Recommendations to policy-makers
 - Integration of research results into policy making
- Recommendations for research funding institutions
 - Adding and sustaining the value of research
- Recommendations to EU research projects
 - Improving the use and impact of your research



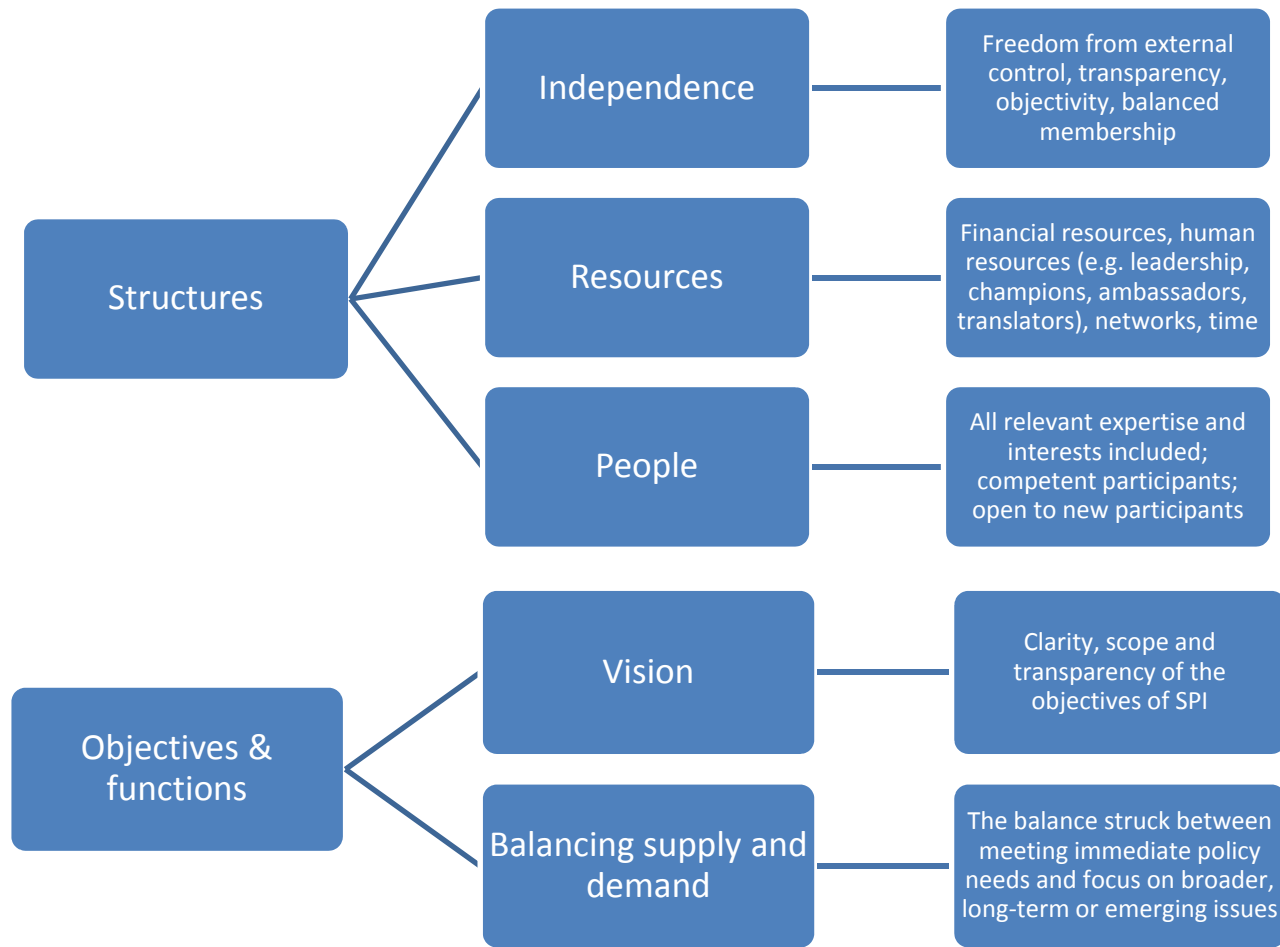
Recommendations for communication

	Individuals	Teams	Organisation
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for training courses and other opportunities to learn about policy processes. Recognise that 'policymakers' are diverse and have diverse views. Some have science backgrounds. Use visual materials. Use different communication tools, e.g. scenarios, user guides, videos or online best practice guides, maps, social media. Be prepared to adapt approaches according to your audience. Plan to publish reviews. These are helpful to non-researchers, and can fit with academic motivations. Contextualise the presentation of research or specific findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss plans and outputs throughout projects, and from the design stage, not just at the end. Policy briefs can be useful but must be disseminated and linked to other communication outputs. Organise field trips and practical demonstrations. Allow communication strategies to evolve and be flexible. Learn from experience in interdisciplinary research. Proactively seek out ways to present research and its implications to different audiences. Preface all reports with accessibly-written executive summaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and fund training for communication skills and understanding of policy processes for scientists. Explore potential for broader assessment of impact, and create and publish in high journals aimed at policy. Encourage scientists to get acquainted with policy processes and support those who wish to operate at the science-policy interface.
Both science and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek out events where other disciplines and sectors will attend. Explore job-shadowing, i.e. scientists and policy-makers observing the day-to-day job of the other. Cultivate personal contacts though recognise that everyone is under time pressures. Look for training courses and opportunities to improve communication and networking skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan projects and budgets to spend time and resources on science-policy interfaces and communication. Explore the use of scenario-building and other tools as a process for building shared understanding. Provide directories of experts /subject-specific contacts. Consider the merits of cross-reviewing: for example in addition to academics reviewing academic papers (peer-review) and policy-makers reviewing policies, explore the merits of academics reviewing policy, or policy-makers reviewing academic outputs. Plan topic-focused events that allow mingling from those with different backgrounds. Organise field trips to bring together researchers and stakeholders across levels (e.g. from policy to land-manager). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote general understanding about science and its role in society. Provide incentives (monetary and career) for interaction between science and policy. Promote discussions about career structures and motivations. Find and support interdisciplinary research. Find training or resourcing for "linker/broker/facilitator" individuals and "linker" events to build science-policy relationships (do not just focus on tangible "Knowledge Exchange outputs"). Develop a communication strategy to help identify and prioritise audiences and partners. Provide funding for networking events.
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that many researchers are personally motivated to see their research used and valued. Recognise that 'scienists' are diverse and do not have knowledge of all issues relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services. Subscribe to feeds about relevant news and policy brief sites. Seek out opportunities to learn how scientific works in general, as well as to learn about specific job-related topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be transparent about questions, and expected needs for current and/or future knowledge. Putting this into a briefing note for researchers can be a helpful starting point for discussion. Welcome conversations about defining questions or problems. Consider developing a list or network of scientific experts and researchers to help you. Provide space and resources to allow teams and individuals to learn and to build contacts beyond the policy sphere. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote transparency and wider understanding (e.g. through training courses) of policy and decision-making and implementation processes. Explore if and why science is valued compared to other forms of evidence. Listen with funders to ensure funded projects (i) are clearly aware of policy priorities, and (ii) encourage communication e.g. enforce clearly written summaries from tender stages. Listen with funders to develop projects that allow flexibility for interaction between science and policy.

- We need **flexible and adaptive communication approaches**
- Communication involves a **broad range of stakeholders**
- We need a **change in mindsets and behaviours**



Attributes of successful SPIs



SPIRALLING out

General briefs:

A beginner's guide to understanding challenges of communicating about biodiversity

What's so special about biodiversity?

A myth-busting-guide to science-policy interfaces (SPIs)

Case study reflections:

Recent reflections on science-policy communication in the context of deer management in Scotland

Reflections on recent experiences with the UK National Ecosystem Assessment

Recommendations:

Recommendations for improving science-policy communication

Designing for success: SPI structures

Goals and roles: SPI objectives and functions

Keep it CRELE: credibility, relevance and legitimacy for SPIs

CRELE Choices: trade-offs in SPI Design



Thank you

For more information about the SPIRAL project, please visit our website: www.spiral-project.eu or contact us at info@spiral-project.eu

