Evidence to Action

How Can PEER Projects Inform Policymaking?

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Introduction

• The interface between Policy and Science is a social process.

• It links scientists and researchers with other actors in policy formulation.

• Its purpose is to allow exchanges, co-evolution and construction of knowledge in order to improve decision making.

• Key elements are research, knowledge transfer and dissemination.
Science and Policy Interface is a Global Issue

- Its continuing to be a global challenge because both Policy and Science are seen as two independent disciplines which intermittently exchanges products.

- There is always a lag of assimilating research findings which prevents dissemination of knowledge through various circles of policy formulation.

- Disconnect among the water professionals (Engineers, Political Scientists, Hydrologists, Agronomist, Foreign Policy Practitioners and Social Scientists).

- They are trained in separate institutions and then hired by different public and private entities.
Bridging the Gap

• Despite their specialised field, all water professionals are educated in either science or policy.

• Science and Policy are not exclusive but inclusive in nature.

• A policy without scientific and factual basis will not solve the problem.

• A solid but isolated knowledge generated by researchers will have no impact on the ground without incorporation in public policy.
Science-Policy Interface Continuum

**FORTRESS SCIENCE**
The special status of science as a value-neutral search for knowledge must be recognised and maintained. Science must be walled off from politics in order to prevent the contamination of scientific research by the agendas, rules, language, and arguments of politics.

**AUTONOMOUS SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS**
Scientific knowledge useful to solving political questions is presented in the form of independent scientific assessments, which maintain the integrity and lack of bias characteristic of the scientific process while summarising scientific consensus in language understandable to policy-makers.

**POLITICALLY ENGAGED SCIENTIFIC ASSESSMENTS**
Scientists must maintain a 'boundary of technical excellence', but it is necessary that science and politics negotiate a consensual interpretation of relevant knowledge. The expert community is politically engaged and actively consults all relevant sides of the ideological spectrum.

**EXTENDED PEER COMMUNITY/DEMOCRATISED SCIENCE**
Scientists must enter the political sphere to provide relevant expertise and judgment while citizens and stakeholders must help define research agendas to construct together knowledge-in-action and shared responsibilities.

**CO-PRODUCTION**
Science is subject to the same social and power relations as politics. Science is one among many arrays of interests, with its own biases. While science may be useful to policy-making, it is necessary to recognise that these spheres are mutually reinforcing, and to avoid the hijacking of policy agendas by scientists as an elite minority.

Jeanie J. Bukowski
General Recommendations

- Since the policy decisions on transboundary water management is being taken by several public entities mainly:
  - Ministry of Energy and Water (takes technical decisions)
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (takes foreign policy decisions)
  - Ministry of Agriculture (takes technical decisions)
- Water policy formulation is a collective action of mostly formal entities with specific mandate and certain priorities.
- In most cases formal entities do no reach the level to act jointly and collectively, therefore they face collective action dilemma.
General Recommendations

- Researchers in general and PEER researchers in particular need to:
  - Recognise Key Policy Decision Makers.
  - Understand their Mandates and Priorities.
  - Conducting Research Need Assessment.
  - Diagnose Key Policy Gaps in Decisions.
  - Pick up Topics for Research.
  - Prioritise some topics over others.
Specific Recommendations

• Creating a network (trust, effective and timely interactions)

• Organising policy dialogue

• Reviewing the existing policy documents (Laws, National Water Policies, Regulations and Manuals)

• Partnership between Public Entities and Research Centres

• Engaging policy makers in the research process:
  • Sharing the research proposal
  • Presenting the progress of research
  • Doing presentations on the completed research topics
Thank You for Your Attention