

Participatory Processes of Research and Policy-Making: Examining Uptake, Access and Representation, and the Role(s) of OS/RRI

GOALS of the WP5: Policy making and societal actors

Objectives

- To investigate the role of Open Access and Open Science resources in policy-making
- To aid understanding of cumulative advantage within policy-making
- Develop ideas to mitigate these effects

Research approach and strategy

- Studies how Open Science outputs are used in policy-making (interviews)
- Identifies which societal actors have influence in public participation in policy-making and whether this reality fosters equality or inequality of access and representation
- Focuses around UN SDG areas of climate, agriculture and health

Tasks

- 5.1: Landscape scan & scoping report
- 5.2 Survey & interviews with policymakers
- **5.3 Workshops with researchers who engage in policy-making processes**

Task 5.3: Investigating the Science-Policy Link

Research Question: Which societal actors participate in policy-making when an OS or RRI approach to research and the science-policy link is taken?

Research Methods

- Recruit researchers and intermediaries with experience engaging in policy-making processes to participate in expert workshops and interviews
- Three guided workshops and one-on-one interviews with participants
- Research sample: 18 participants drawn from research institutes (9), universities (5) and CSOs (4); 10 men, 8 women; drawn from EU (13), Kenya (3), Thailand (1) and USA (1); Academic age ranging from 3-34 with steady distribution

Workshop Discussion Questions

- How can we further enable the uptake of scientific research in the process of policy-making?
- How can we improve equality in representation, access and impact in policy-making?
- Does or can Open Science, specifically, change the uptake of science in policy-making?

Preliminary findings

The Science-Policy Relationship

- How to engage with policymakers
 - Trust and relationships are key
 - Focus on the long game; policymakers' views can take years to shift
 - Project-based work (limited-term funding) is inconsistent with effective policy advice
 - Knowledge translation (not transfer) is key
- How the policymaking process works
 - Awareness of and involvement in multiple arenas of policy-making: global (UN, WHO, etc.), national, municipal, community-level
 - Must have knowledge of the process (timing, workflows, people) to pick the right opportunity order for advice to be effective
 - Politics of policy-making: understanding of the sociopolitical context of policy-making is key

Equality of Access and Representation

- Levers of inequality are present in the science-policy relationship and in the policy-making process
 - Our participants signal the role of **reputation and prestige** in impacting their access to policymakers, **career status and institutional affiliation, race/ethnicity and gender, age, and institutional resources** (or lack thereof)
- Ways to foster equality of access and representation
 - Centering these issues from the start
 - Participatory research, co-creation, citizen science, multi-stakeholder engagement throughout the research process
 - Deployment of creative research and dissemination methods
 - Destabilizing the normative science-society relationship using RRI practices
 - Bringing policymakers and impacted communities together
 - Creating diverse research teams and facilitating access among young and diverse researchers

The Potential for OS to influence research uptake

- Lots of support for some aspects of OS (e.g. **transparency**)
- Anecdotal evidence that OA facilitates uptake by policymakers; however, this theory is roundly rejected
 - Not an issue of access to scientific research, but a matter of **translation, engagement, trust** - the issue is not to find, but to filter information
 - Participants criticize OS for having a conservative vision of research
 - Social relations and networks far more important - Open Data and access to data is critical in some regions (problem of 'data siphoning' in Africa)
- RRI is deemed more promising by participants
 - Success with participatory methods, co-creation, engaging stakeholders throughout the research process
 - Engagement "right from the beginning"

- Knowledge of the policy process is key for engagement
- Academic institutional norms and policy-making frequently do not line up which affects research uptake
- Inequalities shape research processes and in turn, are present in science-policy link
- Participants take thoughtful and innovative approaches to eliminating inequalities in the production of scientific knowledge and how it is deployed in policy-making processes
- RRI is received much more positively (than OS) as mitigating inequalities & fostering equitable engagement with policymakers

Key Takeaways