



2021 PEP annual conference

Workshop:

Best practices for policy communication

Session 1: Positioning your research for policy use

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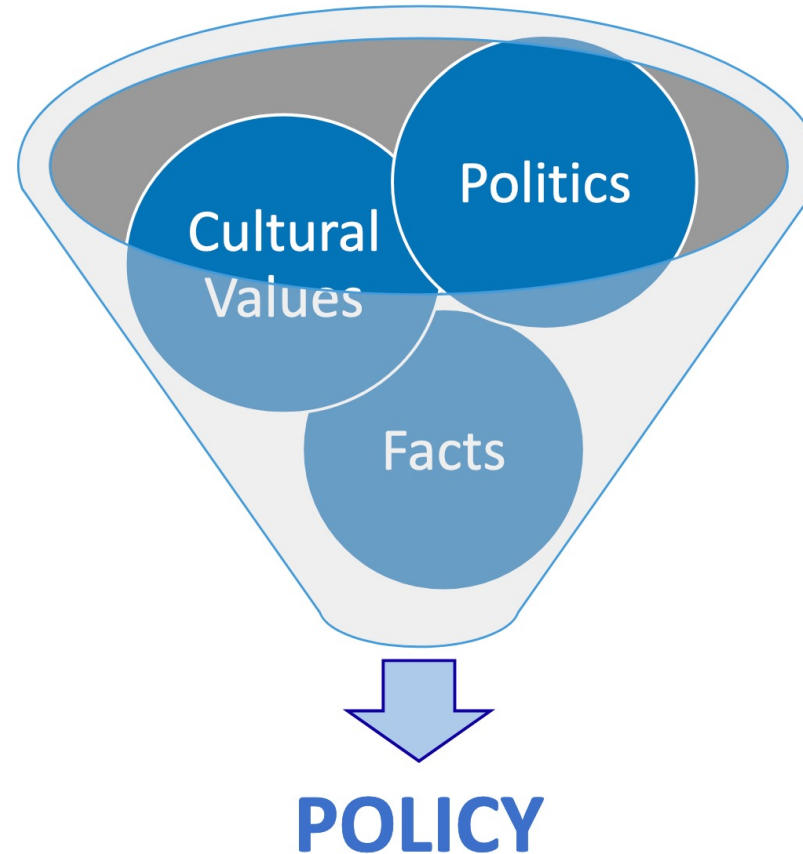
Session 1 - Contents

- ❖ **Science and policy:** a complicated relationship
- ❖ **Channeling scientific evidence** into policymaking
- ❖ **Targeting and engaging stakeholders**
- ❖ **Understanding policy needs:** what policymakers need to know



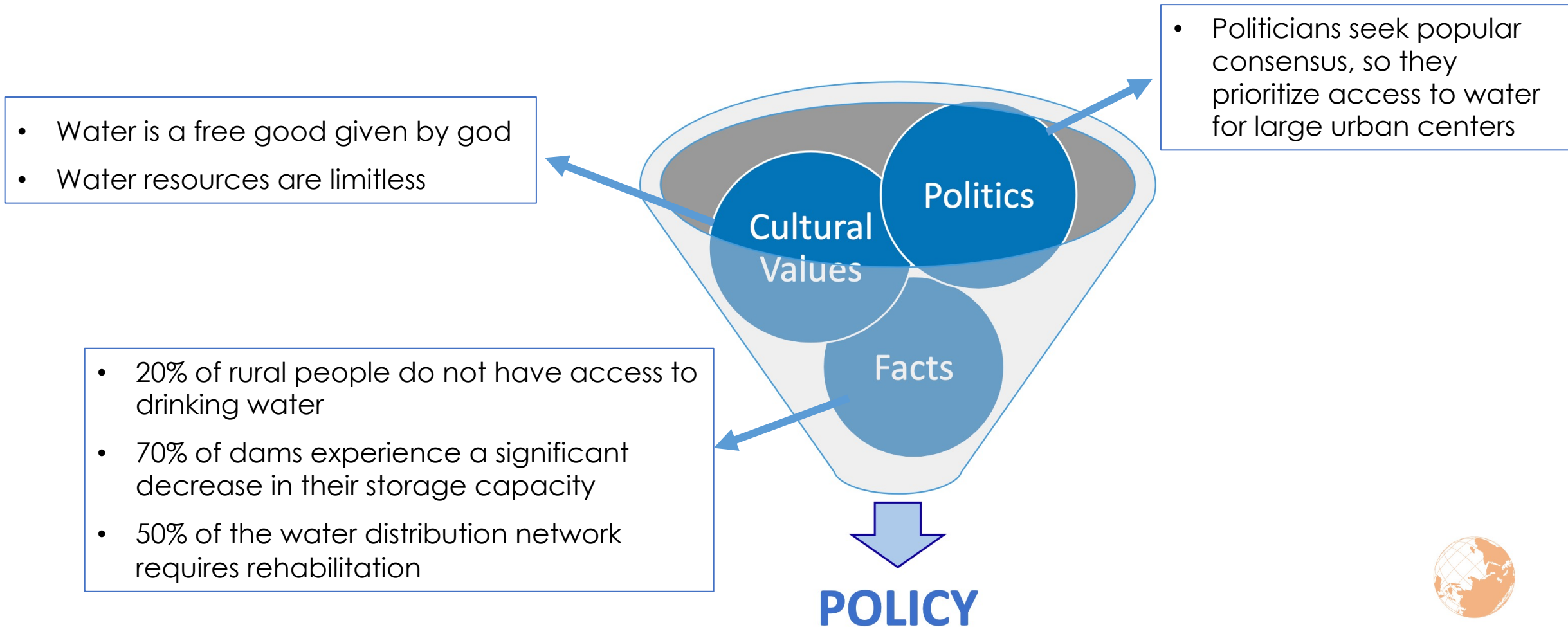
Science and policy: a complicated relationship

An effective policy must be based on **facts**, but it is also influenced by **cultural values** and **politics**.



Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Example: Access to water in Tunisia



Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Science has the disadvantage of focusing on a single piece of the puzzle..

To become a **useful input for policy**, **must be “positioned”** into the broader context

Policy



Evidence gap

Science



Science and policy: a complicated relationship



Babu Rahman, 2017 – UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

How to make research more useful to government officials

“Whereas academics’ value lies in illuminating complexity, civil servants are assessed on their **ability to simplify complex issues down to the key components necessary to make a decision.**”

“What (policymakers) want from research is NOT:

‘It’s complicated’ or ‘Here’s the answer’.

What they want is **comparative work highlighting a range of possible solutions..”**



Science and policy: a complicated relationship



Baruch Fischhoff, 2011

Applying the science of communication to the communication of science

“Communications are adequate if they:

- reach people with the information that they need
- in a form that they can use.”



Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Governance – performance is “measured” by:

Responsiveness:

Extent to which delivered services are consistent with citizen preferences

Effectiveness:

Extent to which adopted actions are achieving desired goals

Efficiency:

Ratio between the quality of services provided (i.e. effectiveness) and the cost to provide them



Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Political economy factors that prevent decision-makers from supporting their decisions on scientific knowledge:

- Culture, ideology - acceptability
- Commitments, budget constraints – feasibility
- Crises – e.g. COVID – diverting attention and resources

Understanding policy needs means **ADAPTING RESEARCH** or its communication **TO SPECIFIC CONTEXTS** and priorities

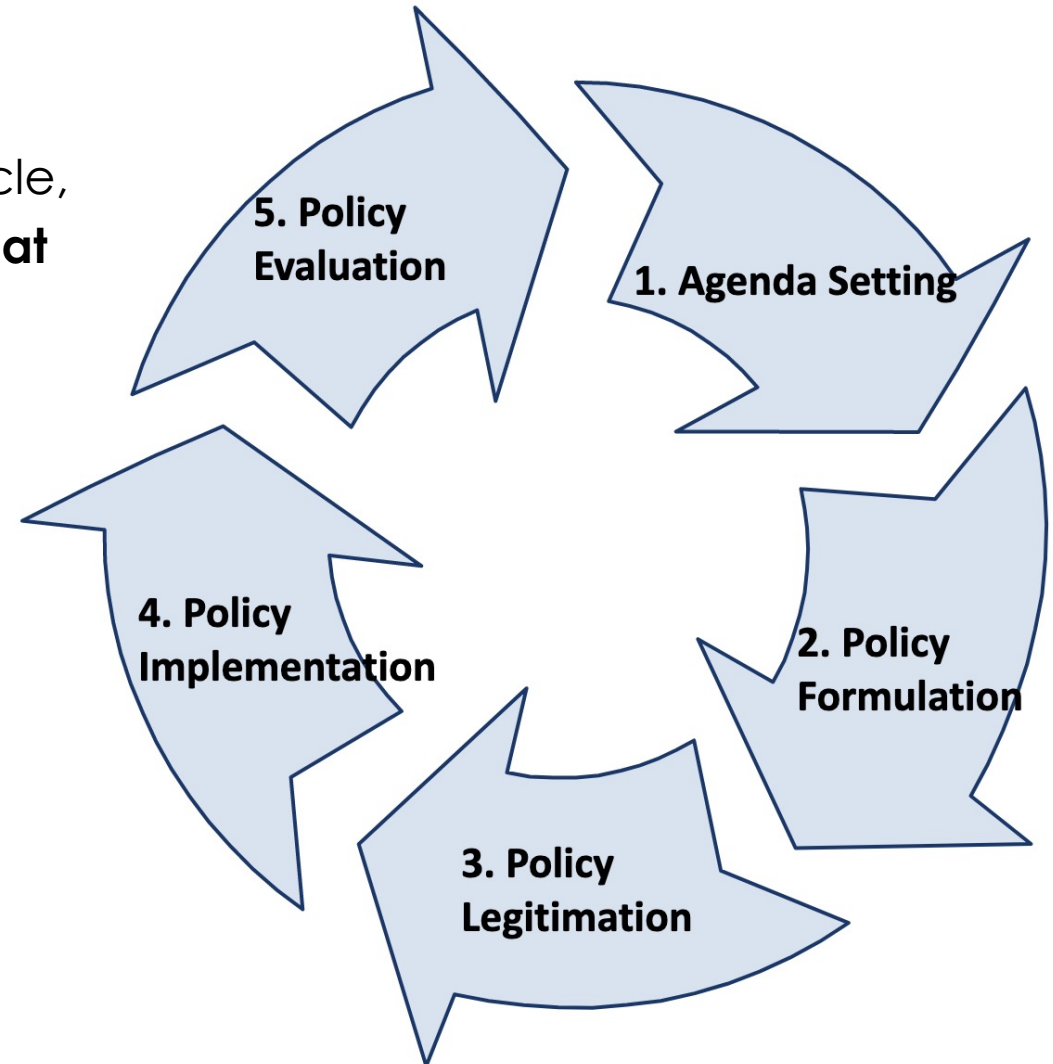


Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Policymaking cycle

Though it appears to follow an orderly and closed cycle, the process **can begin and be abandoned or altered at any point of the cycle.**

You should know where your research/evidence comes in play!



Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Policymaking cycle

Related challenges for EIPM:

Agenda setting

- **Convincing** policy makers of importance and urgency of an issue

Policy formulation

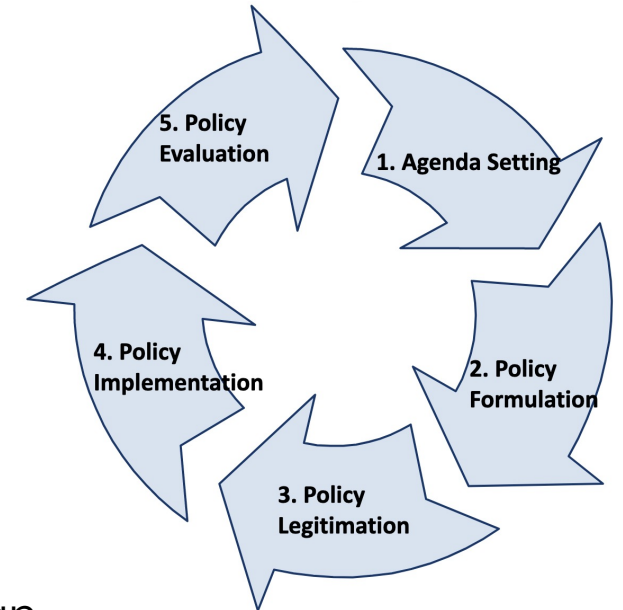
- Identify and compare the « **available policy options** »
- Incorporate evaluation scheme in policy design

Policy legitimation

- **Understanding** how different stakeholders will react to the proposed measures.

Policy implementation and evaluation

- **Resistance** from bureaucracy, limited capacity of implementing organization, limited capacity for state oversight
- Getting the **data** needed to evaluate



Science and policy: a complicated relationship

Policymaking cycle

Overall challenges for EIPM


- 1) The formulation and implementation of policies are **inherently political**:
 - involve conflict and struggle among individuals and groups, officials and state bodies who have **conflicting ideas, interests, values, and information**.
- 2) These political, stakeholder and value **considerations**:
 - are **outside the scope of science**,
 - **must be incorporated** by the multiple actors involved in the policy advisory process.
- 3) Few government institutions have a clear definition of what should be considered as **sufficient/reliable evidence**



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

What is evidence for policy?

Different sources and types of evidence used to inform the policy advisory process:

- Raw data
 - Grey literature
 - “People”
 - Scientific literature/analysis
- 

All sources/types are relevant and necessary

Evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM):

- Requires to use scientific (research-based) evidence “among inputs”
- **But the purpose is not to reduce the policy process to a scientific problem-solving exercise...**

- **N.B. Policymakers often prefer sources they are “familiar with” - can help to cite known sources when relevant**



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

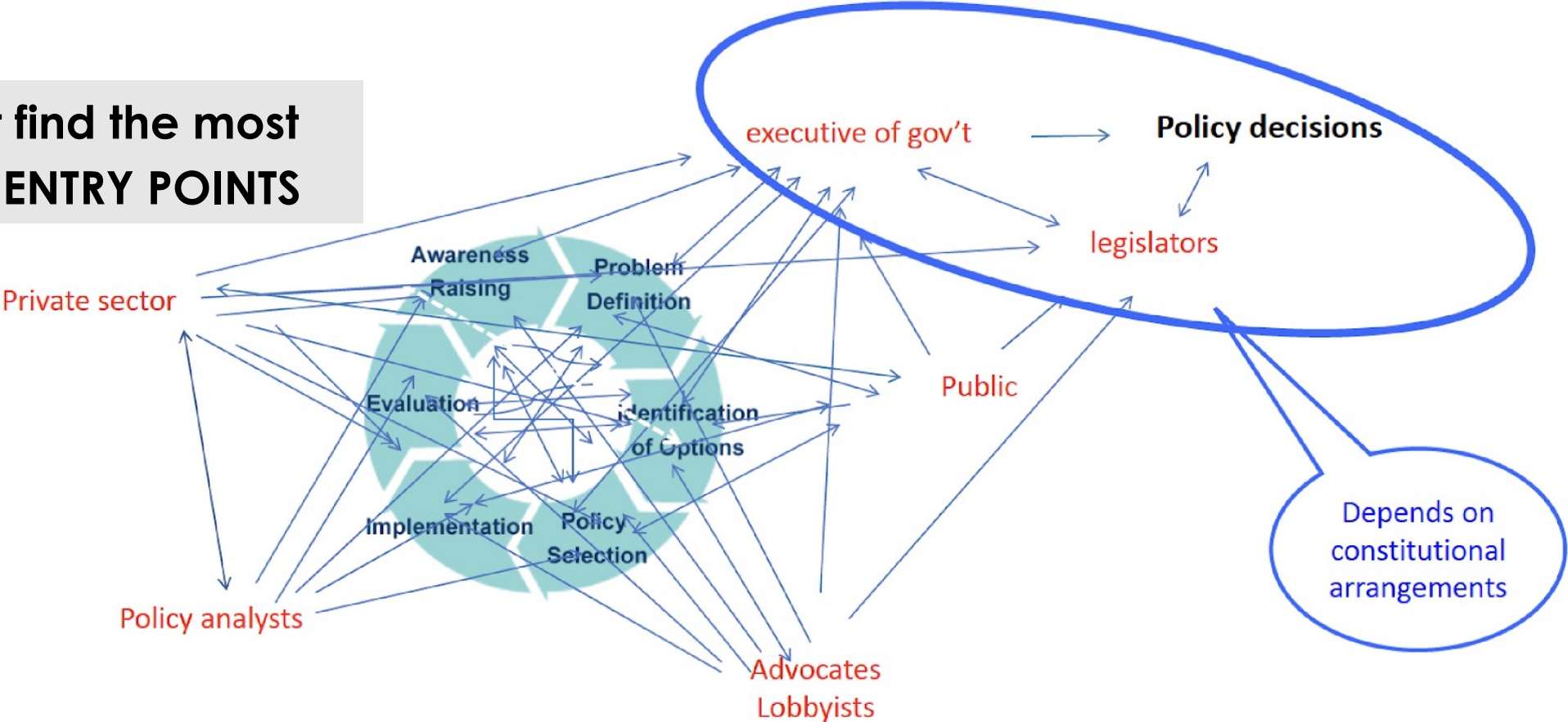
The **relative influence of scientific evidence** versus other factors/inputs can be illustrated as follows:



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

But a more realistic illustration of the **many sources of influences, competing** over the policy decision process would rather look like this:

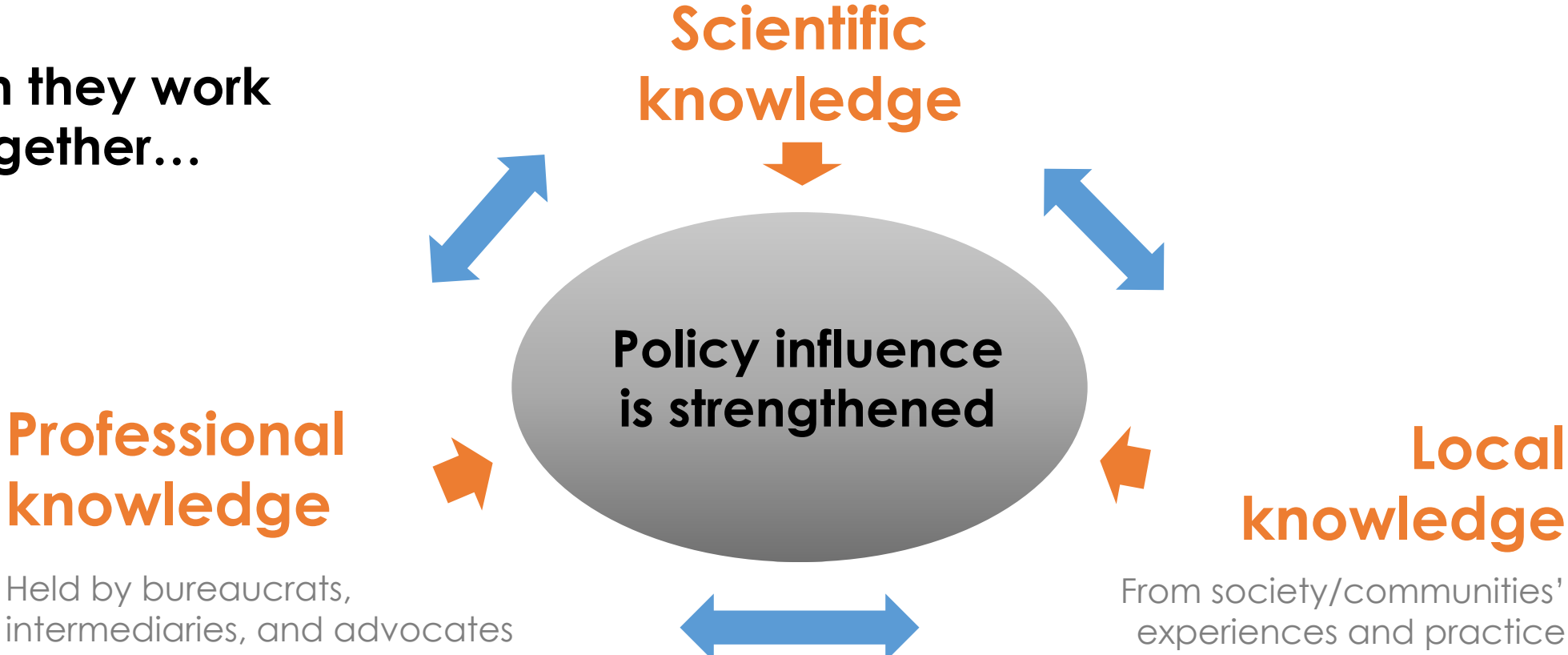
You must find the most strategic ENTRY POINTS



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

Nugroho & al., 2018

When they work together...



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

What are the **main types** of stakeholders?



Stakeholders = influence paths

State

Political
Parties

Think tanks

Civil society

IOs &
NGOs

Research
Community

Business
Community

The People

Media



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

For your PEP project, we recommend to focus on:

= more “direct” influence paths



State

Political Parties

Think tanks

Civil society

IOs & NGOs

Research Community

Business Community

The People

Media



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

COMMUNICATION TIPS: Focus on...

STATE

their specific mandate/responsibilities

POLITICIANS

their “political capital”

CIVIL

their specific “advocacy agenda/objectives”

BUSINESS

economic benefits

MEDIA

the interests of their “audience”

IOs/NGOs

their “current” agenda/thematic priorities



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

Stakeholder analysis

Determine whose interest should be taken into account in relation to a specific policy/program.

Questions to ask (at dissemination stage):

- Who has **power/influence** in specific policy process (formulation, adoption, implement..)
 - Who can provide **entry point** into the decision process?
- Who can **“use” findings** to achieve their mandate/objectives?
- Who can **benefit from/support** the “policy”?



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

Stakeholder analysis – CLASSIFICATION, based on “POWER”

EXAMPLE:

1. VISIBLE POWER

observable decision-making processes

political parties, ministries, law-makers

2. HIDDEN POWER

actors behind official decisions

political advisors, lobbies

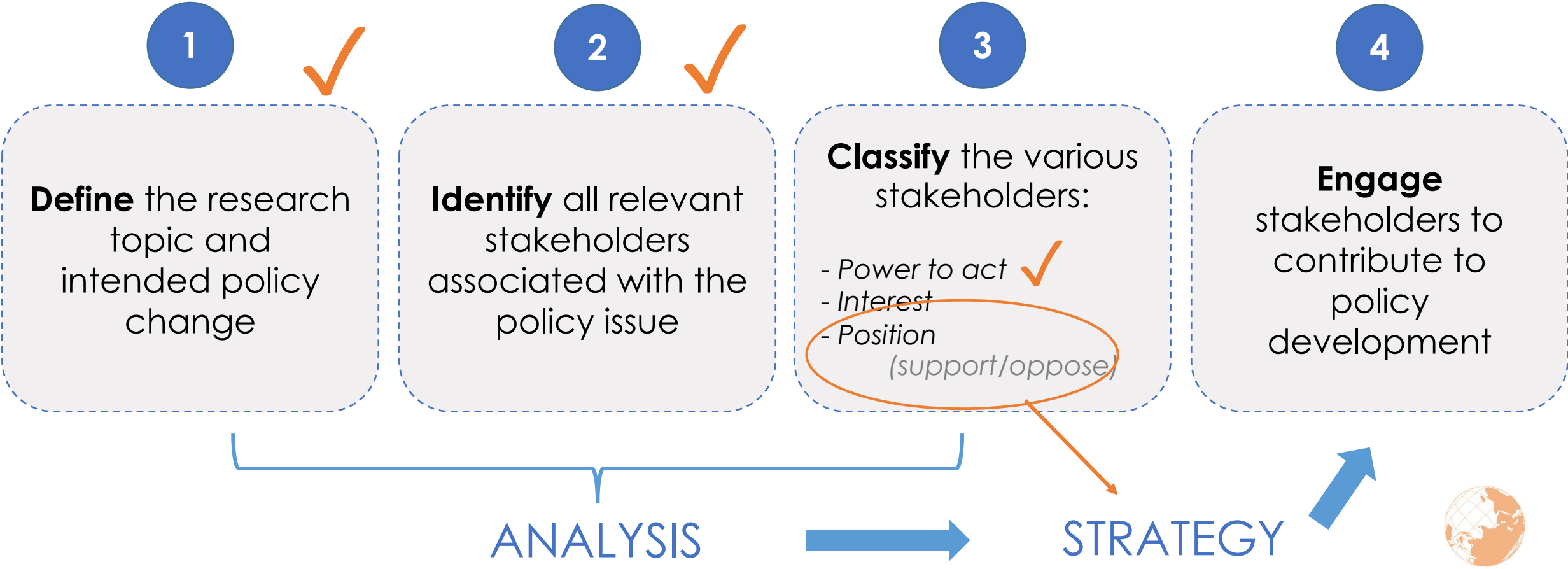
3. INTANGIBLE POWER

shapes meaning in society & influences how people think about an issue

social networks, media, advocacy groups?

Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

Stakeholder analysis – 4 steps



Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking

Stakeholder analysis – CLASSIFICATION, based on:

1 - Level of interest/engagement:

- To what degree will the stakeholder be affected by the policy change?
- What vested interest do they have?

2 - Power to act:

- What role does the stakeholder have in determining the policy?
- What resources can they mobilize?
- What influence does the stakeholder have on policy implementation

3 - Position/Stance:

- How strongly do they support or oppose an issue?

**Update stakeholder analysis
after findings - recommendation**



Stakeholder analysis – classifying stakeholders

Example:

Policy Issue: Orange Roughy (type of fish) in Namibia is endangered due to over fishing

Policy Solution: Prohibit fishing during the reproduction season of Orange Roughy

1 - Identify players who are **interested/engaged**

State/gov

Ministry
of Commerce

Namibia
Ministry
of Environment

Business

Namibia
Fishery Supply

Fisherman
Organizations

Foreign
Companies

NGOs

Green
Peace

Earth Life
Namibia

Civil

Local Student
Association

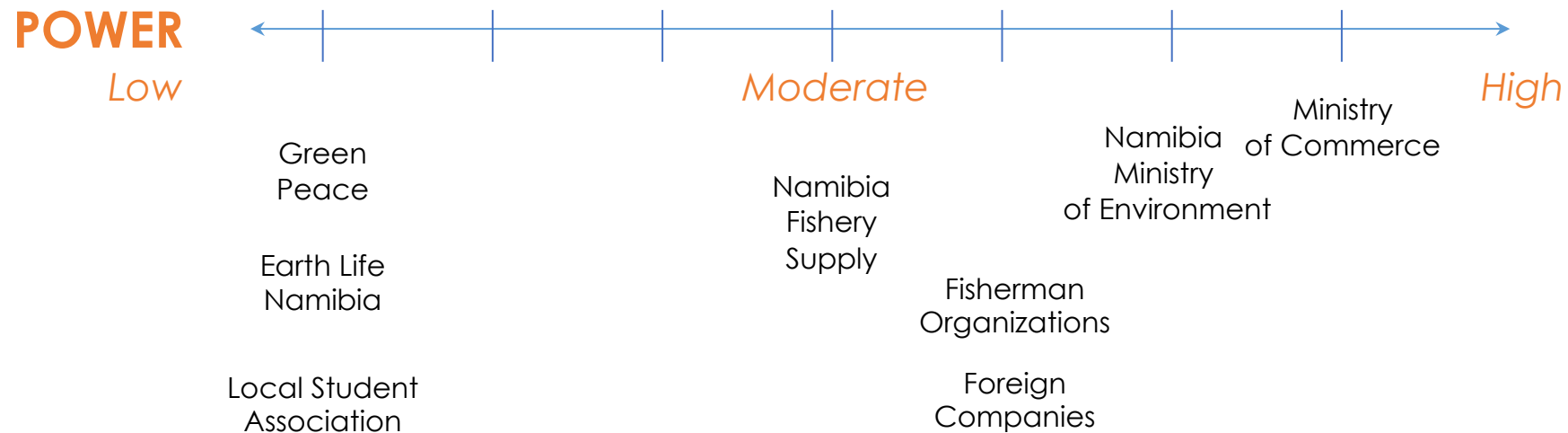


Stakeholder analysis – classifying stakeholders

Example:

Policy Issue: Orange Roughy (type of fish) in Namibia is endangered due to over fishing

Policy Solution: Prohibit fishing during the reproduction season of Orange Roughy



#2 - Identify players who can affect/influence decision-making

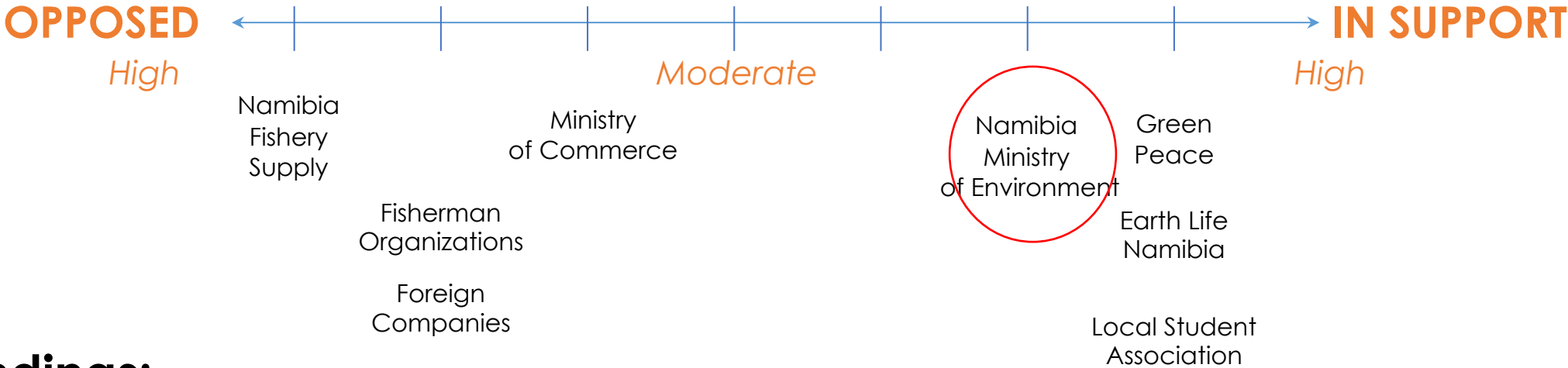


Stakeholder analysis – classifying stakeholders

Example:

Policy Issue: Orange Roughy (type of fish) in Namibia is endangered due to over fishing

Policy Solution: Prohibit fishing during the reproduction season of Orange Roughy



After findings:

#3 - Identify players who can will likely **support or oppose** your position



Engaging stakeholders

Be proactive!

Do NOT expect policy-makers to find/read your research.

Be prepared!

Before you meet, be sure to do your homework:

- What are **their interests**?
- What **information** do they need? Or can they provide?
- What is the **best strategy** to:
 - interact with them?
 - to raise interest for your project?



Engaging stakeholders

Beware!

Policy-makers often:

- **prefer certain institutions or researchers** (based on background, experience, or political leanings)
- **do not trust** towards information and sources external to the public policy system

CONTEXT MATTERS!

Interest in issues that are important “NOW”

- Media – public perceptions
- Commitments – electoral cycle
- Especially related to constituencies/core supporters

Engaging stakeholders – entry points

Entry points are:

- **Windows of opportunity** to catch the attention of policymakers, stakeholders, or the broader public.
 - **Government processes:** revisions of existing legislation, budgets, or major policies
 - **Changes in administration:** new national, sub-national, or local governments might dismiss or welcome new information (compared to their predecessors)
 - **Political events:** regional meetings, global summits, elections, launch events for new policies or programs
 - **Social events:** events related to an advocacy issue (*international days, VIP visits..*)
 - **Conferences and workshops**
- **People:**
 - **Existing or accessible contacts** who can provide introductions or create opportunities to connect with target stakeholders



Engaging stakeholders – entry points

How to take advantage of an entry point:

Anticipate: **Be prepared** to discuss your research at seminars, conferences & public debates

Disseminate: **Raise awareness** by disseminating information on a website or other platform, and create space for debate and discussion on the issue

Make allies: **Work with other researchers** focused on projects that have similar stakeholders, impacts, or policy implications

Foster relationships with influential leaders, NGOs, or journalists that can advocate for your work



Preparing your “policy message/argument”

- What do policymakers need to know? (cont.)
- What makes a good policy argument?
- Defining and organizing key messages for greater effect
- Adapting to your audience



Hands-on (preparing for tomorrow)

Breakout room with your team: access your slides

1. Identify the « **stage of policy cycle** » that your project relates to
2. Identify your **target stakeholders** (3 types)
3. Identify the « **key policy messages** » from your findings

