Workshop:
Best practices for policy engagement

Session 1: Understanding policy processes

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Session 1 - Contents

- Your PEP project: objectives and requirements
- Policy processes – definitions, cycle, constraints
- Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking
- Policy stakeholders
- Hands-on: Initiating your policy context analysis
Why are we here?

Evidence-informed policymaking

- The concept implies that "one should prioritise scientific or research-based evidence as input" into policy design and decision processes.

- Sounds obvious? Think again...
  - The emphasis on applying scientific standards of proof to policymaking is a recent and still disputed phenomenon.
  - In most countries, governments have yet to develop:
    - Clear requirements and procedures
    - Internal capacities to link scientific evidence with policymaking
Why are we here?

Evidence-informed policymaking – the objective of your PEP project

• PEP research aims to inform policy

• Providing evidence that is both:
  
  ➢ **Reliable** (scientifically-sound)
  
  ➢ **Contextualised**:
    
    • From a local perspective
    
    • Addressing COUNTRY-SPECIFIC POLICY NEEDS / QUESTIONS

Scientific training + mentorship

PEP commitment to GAC in CCWG initiative

This training + policy outreach mentorship
Why are we here?

Purpose of this workshop:

• Make sure your PEP research answers actual policy questions

PEP requirements from grantees:

• Identify and consult with stakeholders
  ➢ PEP requires stakeholder analysis and periodic reports

• Develop a (parallel) policy paper analysis
  ➢ Starting with a policy context analysis, to clarify the key policy questions to address
Why are we here?

Structure of this workshop:

• **Session 1:** Understanding policy processes
• **Session 2:** Designing research to address actual policy needs
• **Session 3:** Designing an effective policy engagement strategy
Policy processes

Definitions - policy

POLICY:
• A relatively stable, purposive course of action (or inaction) followed by an actor (or set of actors) in dealing with a problem or matter of concern.

PUBLIC POLICY:
• Policy developed by governmental bodies and officials.
  • Process by which governments translate their political vision into plans and actions to achieve the changes they desire to make in the real world
  • Includes not only the decision to adopt a law or make a rule on some topic, but also the subsequent actions aimed at implementing and enforcing the law or rule
An effective policy must be based on facts, but it is also influenced by cultural values and politics.
Policy processes

Development

Example: Access to water in Tunisia

- Water is a free good given by god
- Water resources are limitless

- 20% of rural people do not have access to drinking water
- 70% of dams experience a significant decrease in their storage capacity
- 50% of the water distribution network requires rehabilitation

- Politicians seek popular consensus, so they prioritize access to water for large urban centers
Policy processes

Governance

1. Societal demands
2. Political interaction
3. Government
4. Implementation
5. Policy
Policy processes

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
Policy processes

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
Policy processes

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.**
Policy processes

What about your PEP research?

Policymaking cycle

Research-based evidence can (and should) be used at EVERY STAGE of the cycle to:

- **IDENTIFY** problems
- **MEASURE** their magnitude and seriousness
- **REVIEW** alternative policy interventions
- **ASSESS** the likely consequences of particular policy actions (intended and unintended)
- **EVALUATE** what, in fact, results from policy (effectiveness, efficiency, unexpected outcomes)
Policy processes

Policymaking cycle

Each stage has its own challenges for EIPM:

**Agenda setting**
Government decides to address a specific problem
- **Challenge:** Convincing policy makers of importance and urgency of an issue

**Policy formulation**
Set objectives, identify & compare (+/-) potential measures, define policy instruments to implement
- **Challenge:** Gathering knowledge and expertise to identify and assess best potential measures
Policy processes

Policymaking cycle

Each stage has its own challenges for EIPM:

**Policy legitimation**
Assess and secure popular and political support for selected measure

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

**Policy implementation**
Allocate resources, mandate & supervise implementers

- **Challenge:** Resistance from bureaucracy, limited capacity of implementing organization, limited capacity for state oversight
Policy processes

Policymaking cycle

Each stage has its own **challenges for EIPM**:

**Policy evaluation**

- Assess effectiveness, efficiency (cost vs results) and other consequences of implemented measure.
- Evaluate new challenges that came up through the policy process.

➢ **Challenge:** Getting the data needed to evaluate
Policy processes

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**  
  Do not speak by themselves - **must be analyzed and interpreted**, i.e. requires a scientific methodology

All relevant, but...
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**

No official «review/validation» process – *standards of quality can vary considerably*. Potential biases from organization's objectives.

All relevant, but...
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” - experience, expertise**

Potential biases (context, subjectivity, interests)

All relevant, but...
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" - experience, expertise
- Scientific literature

- Often based on research led in different context.
- No account of «subjective values/considerations» and practical constraints – difficult to apply.

All relevant, but...
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

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...

All sources/types are relevant and necessary

- 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

Scientific knowledge

Decision-making
Good policy requires effective use of all

Professional knowledge
Held by bureaucrats, intermediaries, and advocates

Local knowledge
From society/communities' experiences and practice
Professional knowledge is held by bureaucrats, intermediaries, and advocates. Local knowledge is derived from society/communities' experiences and practice.

Scientific knowledge is strengthened when they work together. This strengthened knowledge influences policy-making.
To understand policy needs/priorities, must engage and consult with...

- **Scientific knowledge**
- **Professional knowledge**
  - Held by bureaucrats, intermediaries, and advocates
- **Local knowledge**
  - From society/communities' experiences and practice

Channeling scientific evidence into policymaking
Policy stakeholders

**A ctors** (individuals or organizations) with a vested interest in the concerned policy

- An **interest** can be based on:
  - A current or future gain, or
  - Damages that the actor may suffer in relation to the policy
What are the **main types** of stakeholders?

- State
- Political Parties
- Think tanks
- Civil society
- IOs & NGOs
- Research Community
- Business Community
- The People
- Media
Policy stakeholders

For your PEP project, we recommend to focus on:

- State
- Political Parties
- Think tanks
- Civil society
- IOs & NGOs
- Research Community
- Business Community
- The People
- Media
Specialized bodies working in coordination.

- Those **producing policies** are legislators, executives, administrators, judges.
- Supposed to be the *impartial arbitrator* between major interests.

**BUT:**

- State bodies often **compete** with each other, and **do not coordinate** their actions, particularly when their **respective responsibilities** are not clearly defined.
- Also, degree of expertise, or "**technical knowledge**", can vary.

**Communication tip:** Focus on mandate/responsibilities
Help aggregate interests - converting the particular demands of interest groups into general policy alternatives.

**BUT:**

Mostly interested in “controlling power” through government

**Policies are often instrumental** to gaining power, rather than the other way around

**Communication tip:** Focus on their « political capital »
Policy stakeholders

CIVIL SOCIETY

Public space where people associate freely for the pursuit of common goals.
- Incl. mechanisms through which individuals/groups demand transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and efficiency (from policy).

BUT:

Not a unitary actor - NOT cohesive/coherent, equal, organized, or coordinated.

Communication tip: Focus on their « advocacy agenda/objectives »
Largely independent actors who pursue *wealth* and *power* through the delivery of goods and services.

**BUT:**

- Objectives pursued are always “self-serving”, *profit-oriented*
- Serving the *interests of a few* to the expense of most

**Communication tip:** Focus on economic benefits
Help determine what people think about, and shape their attitudes.

- Influence the capacity of government officials to convert their ideas into policy

**BUT:**
- Generally provides minimal coverage of policy issues
- Often owned or **controlled** by the state and economic interest groups who introduce a **bias** on which news are conveyed and how.

**Communication tip:** Focus on the interests of their « audience »
Policy stakeholders

IOs & NGOs/INGOs

NGOs / INGOs: independent of governments - two types:
- Advocacy: aim to influence governments with a specific goal,
- Operational: provide services.

IOs (i.e. intergovernmental – formed by treaties)
- Help set the international agenda, cooperation among states, mediate political bargaining, promote initiatives in favor of collective good

BUT:
- Focused on specific “topics” (development trends)

Communication tip: Focus on their agenda/thematic priorities
Stakeholder analysis

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

Questions to ask:

- Who has power/influence in specific policy process (formulation, adoption, implement..)
- Who can inform viz specific needs/constraints related to policy?
- Who can benefit from/support the “policy”?
- Who can provide entry point into the decision process?
Communications are adequate if they reach people with the information that they need in a form that they can use.”

“Useful analysis requires effective communication among diverse individuals”
Go to your team’s Google slides and…

Slide 1: **Reproduce this example** (fill the boxes) for your project.

- Water is a free good given by god
- Water resources are limitless
- 20% of rural people do not have access to drinking water
- 70% of dams experience a significant decrease in their storage capacity
- 50% of the water distribution network requires rehabilitation

Indicate your PEP project’s topic/title:

- Politicians seek popular consensus, so they prioritize access to water for large urban centers
Go to your team’s Google slides and...

Slides 2-3: Associate your PEP project with the relevant..

#1 – Objective/role

- IDENTIFY problems
- MEASURE their magnitude and seriousness
- REVIEW alternative policy interventions
- ASSESS the likely consequences of particular policy actions
- EVALUATE what, in fact, results from policy (effectiveness, efficiency, unexpected outcomes)

#2 – Stage of the policy cycle

1. Agenda Setting
2. Policy Formulation
3. Policy Legitimation
4. Policy Implementation
5. Policy Evaluation
HANDS-ON

Go to your team’s Google slides and...

Slide 4:  
# 1 - Identify 3 categories of relevant stakeholders for your project

# 2 – Name one example (institution, organization) for each category

- State
- Political Parties
- Think tanks
- Civil society
- IOs & NGOs
- Research Community
- Business Community
- The People
- Media
Thank you!

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