



Food and Agriculture Organization  
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# How can science inform food policy making ?

Alexandre Meybeck, FAO

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# Introduction

What do policy makers expect from Science?

Not more complex problems

Clear answers to their questions

Easy solutions to difficult problems that are already on the table. Or new opportunity. (*silver bullet, win/win*)

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# Outline

- 1) Science/policy making interactions
  - 2) How to better communicate with policy makers?
  - 3) How to better organize the science policy interface for food?
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# 1) Science/policy making interactions

- Research agenda setting
- Expertise and advice, on request
- Structured science/policy interfaces
- “Unsolicited advice” from science to policy makers



# Research agenda setting

Discussion between research and government on priorities and financing

Emergence of examples of broader reflexions, including consultations of stakeholders

- 2006–2007 CAP–environment (INRA, France)
  - National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) (Australia)
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## Expertise and advice, on request

- Requests for advice and expertise on issues, with various degrees of formality
  - Formal requests for advice to scientific organizations or institutions (national research, academies, Joint Research Center...)
  - Formal requests for advice to panels or bodies including science representatives, among other stakeholders (ex Conseil de l'Alimentation in France)
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# Structured science/policy interfaces

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
  - Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem (IPBES)
  - International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)
  - High–level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition (HLPE)
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# HLPE Functions

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- (i) Assess and analyze the current state of food security and nutrition and its underlying causes.
  - (ii) Provide scientific and knowledge-based analysis and advice on specific policy-relevant issues, utilizing existing high quality research, data and technical studies.
  - (iii) Identify emerging issues, and help members of CFS prioritize future actions and attentions on key focal areas.
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# “Unsolicited advice” from science to policy makers

- Reports from Think tanks
- Reports and briefs from CGIAR centers
- Reports and briefs from groups of research and knowledge organizations
- Reports from scientific “Institutions”



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## **2) How to better communicate with policy makers?**

Conditions for success

- Substance
- Form
- Institutions



# Substance

- Identify and address clearly a problem, of relevance for the readers to whom it is addressed
- Evidence based, relying, most of the time on existing peer reviewed literature, with clear processes of validation for grey literature
- Challenges: lack of evidence, uncertainty, controversies



## Form

- Scientific and serious (can mean long, with lots of references)
  - Very careful wording (political sensitivity, “*objective*”)
  - Readable
  - Clearly separate findings and recommendations
  - Beware of the advocacy tendency
  - Often a report (variable length) + a summary (5–10p)  
+ recommendations (generally 1–2p)
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# Institutions

- Clear separation science/policy
  - Identified channel of access to policy makers/institutions
  - Recognition as a scientific institution
  - Be part of the political agenda
  - Be relevant to various stakeholders that, in turn, influence policy making
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## **3) How to better organize the science policy interface for food?**

- Use existing channels
- Liaise with policy relevant bodies
- Seize opportunities in the policy agenda



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**Thank you**

Alexandre.Meybeck@fao.org

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