Science-Policy Training Workshop

14 January 2020 - Budapest

20 January 2020 - Porto

Science-Policy Training

SCIENCE POLICY INTERFACES

EKLIPSE
Knowledge & Learning Mechanism
on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services

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What are SPIs?

My policy-maker doesn't understand me.

> There are many [conferences] - particularly with an academic style focus, which a lot of them are - I wouldn't even think about going because I would probably be asleep after the opening talk!
>
> *Mr N, decision-maker*

What are SPIs?

*« For effective application of scientific results to policy planning, there should be **a communication mechanism** to translate findings into formats that policy makers can easily understand. »*

APN Science-Policy Dialogue South Asia: Thimphu, Jan 2015

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What are SPIs?

The **science-policy interfaces** have been defined as "social processes which encompass relations between scientists and other actors in the **policy process**, and which allow for exchanges, co-evolution, and joint construction of knowledge with the aim of **enriching decision-making**" (van den Hove, 2007, p. 807)

SPIs involve **exchange of information** and knowledge **leading to learning**, and ultimately to **influencing decisions** and **changing behaviour** – i.e. doing something differently as a result of the learning (see A Myth-busting guide to SPIs, and Useful references on SPIs)
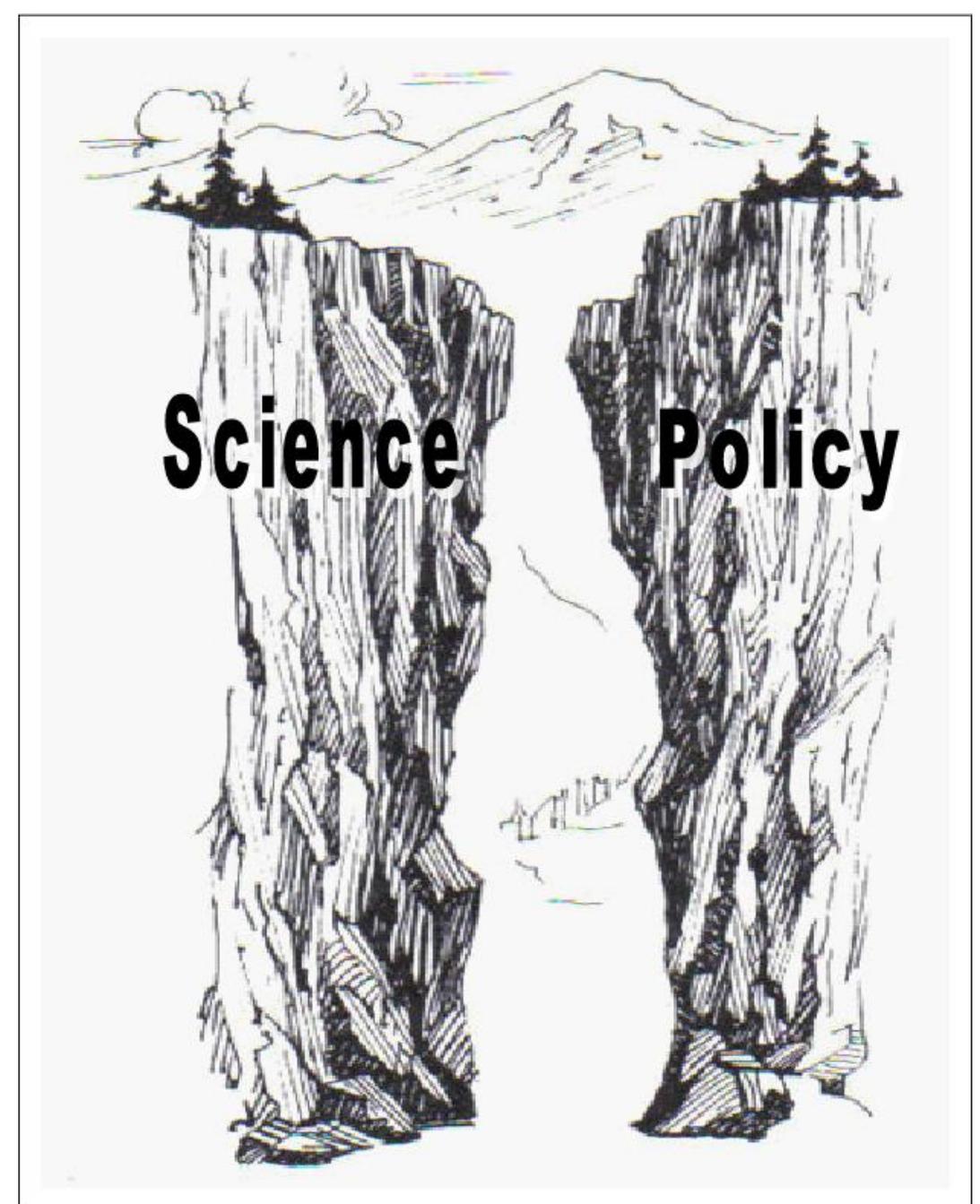
Godfrey, Linda, Nikki Funke and Carmel Mbizvo. "Bridging the science–policy interface: A new era for South African research and the role of knowledge brokering." (2010).

From Science to Policy
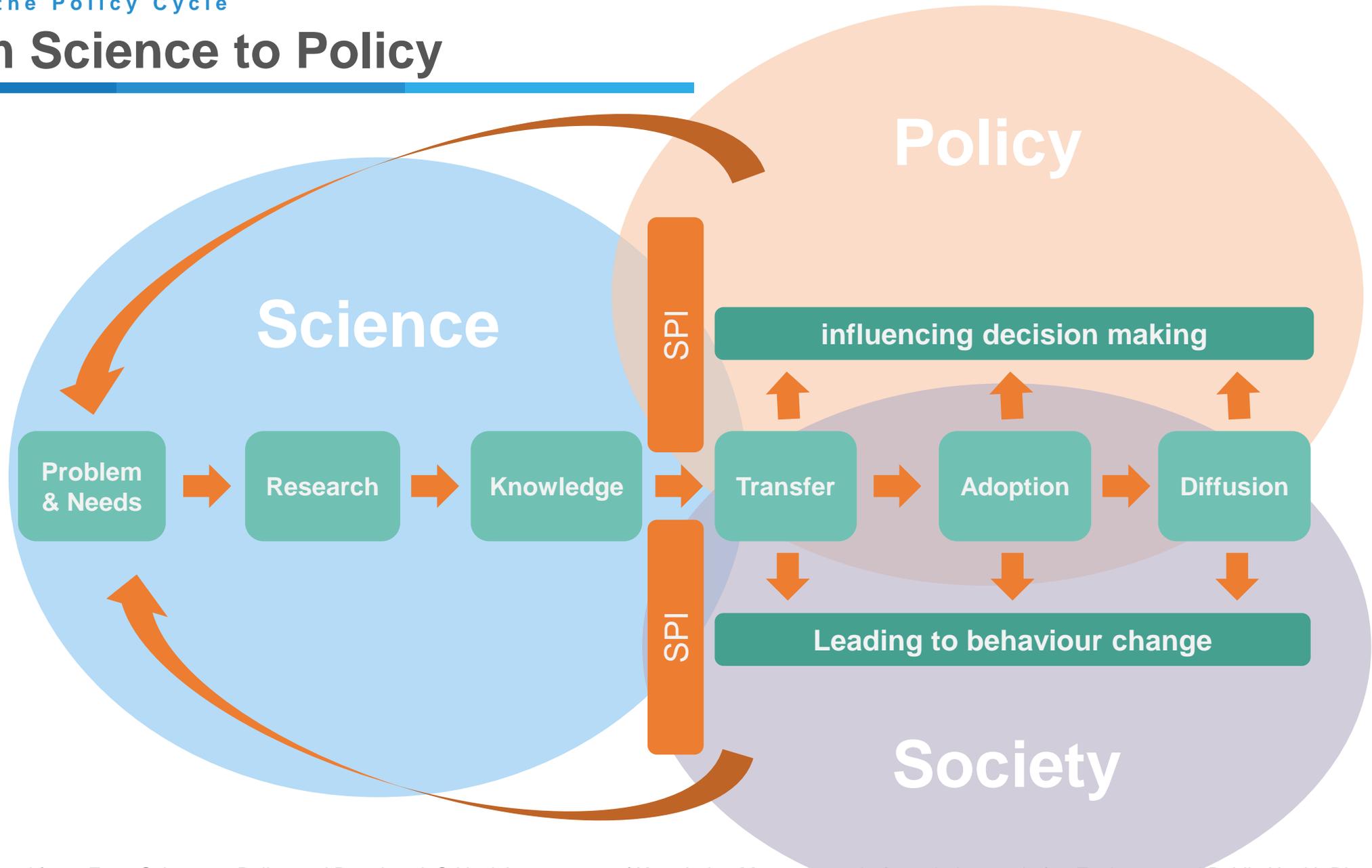
SPIs in detail

Indeed,

SPIs involve complex interactions and learning processes. Often **luck plays a role** in why, when and how interactions happen, work, and result in learning. **Time**, **repetition** and **multiple communication channels** and **methods** can all help – there is no single magic bullet and no one-size-fits-all solution for ideal SPI communication.

What stakeholders can be involved?

- A range of actors are or can be involved in science-policy interfaces including:

Research institutions & scientists

Research funders

Businesses and business organisations

Decision makers (from international to local level)

Civil society organisations

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Types of SPIs

- SPIs cover a very **wide range of communication** forums, situations and methods

- They can be **formal** or **informal**,

- Driven more by **policy demand** or by **supply of science**

- **Long-term processes** or **one-off events**

- Their common feature is the **potential for exchange of information, joint knowledge development and learning.**

Types of SPIs

Some are very formal structures,

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Townhall meeting

Commission consultation

Official policy implementation review

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

Discussing a project with funders

Co-deciding how to carry out research

Many are less formal structures,

research summaries emailed randomly to government departments.

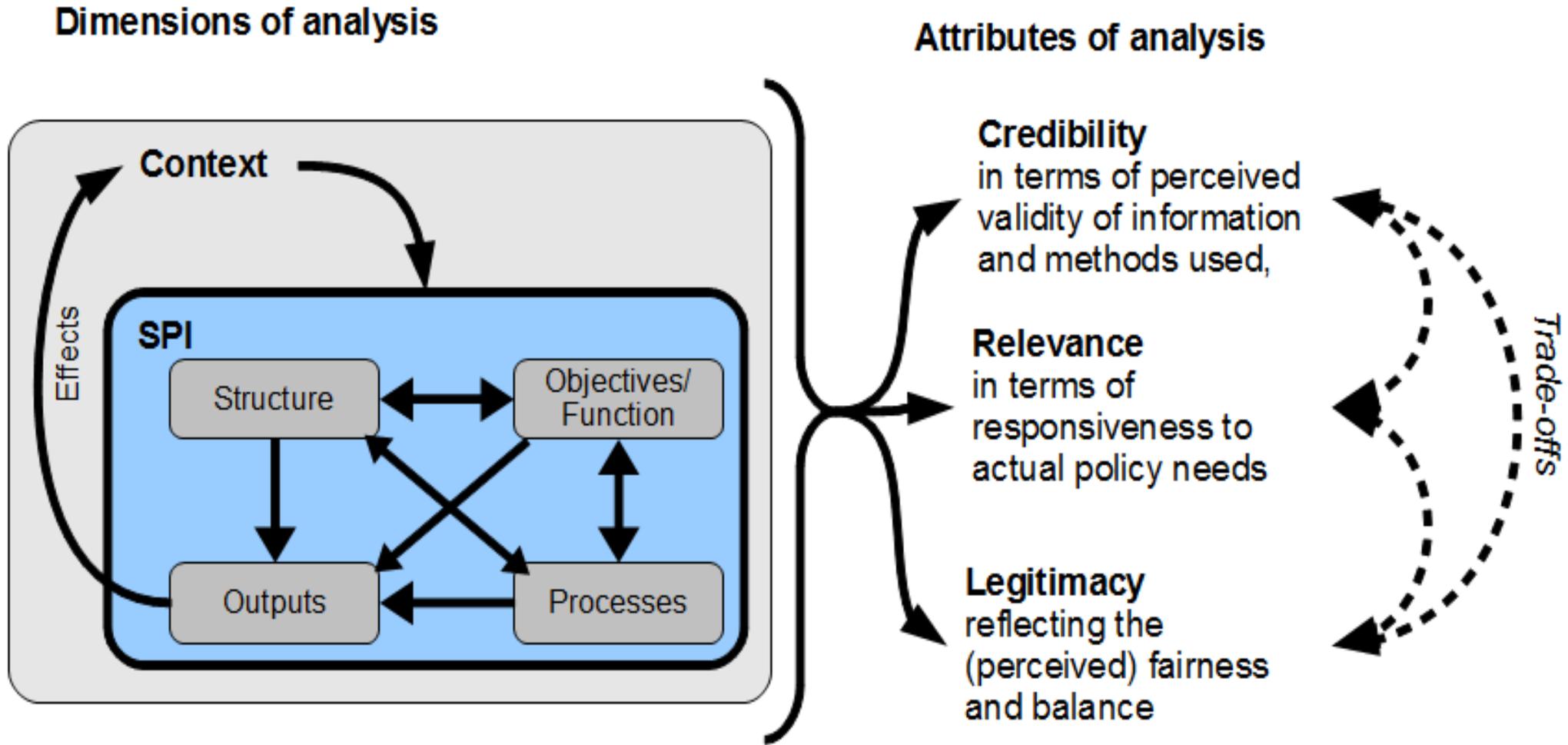A workshop with policy-makers and scientists, and maybe other stakeholders

a field trip

one-to-one conversations between a decision-maker and a scientist

Lobbying

conference presentations of scientific results

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SPIs context and attributes

Dimensions of analysis

Attributes of analysis

Context

Effects

SPI

| Structure | Objectives/ Function |
| Outputs | Processes |

Credibility
in terms of perceived validity of information and methods used,

Relevance
in terms of responsiveness to actual policy needs

Legitimacy
reflecting the (perceived) fairness and balance

Trade-offs

SPIs context and attributes

Dimensions of analysis
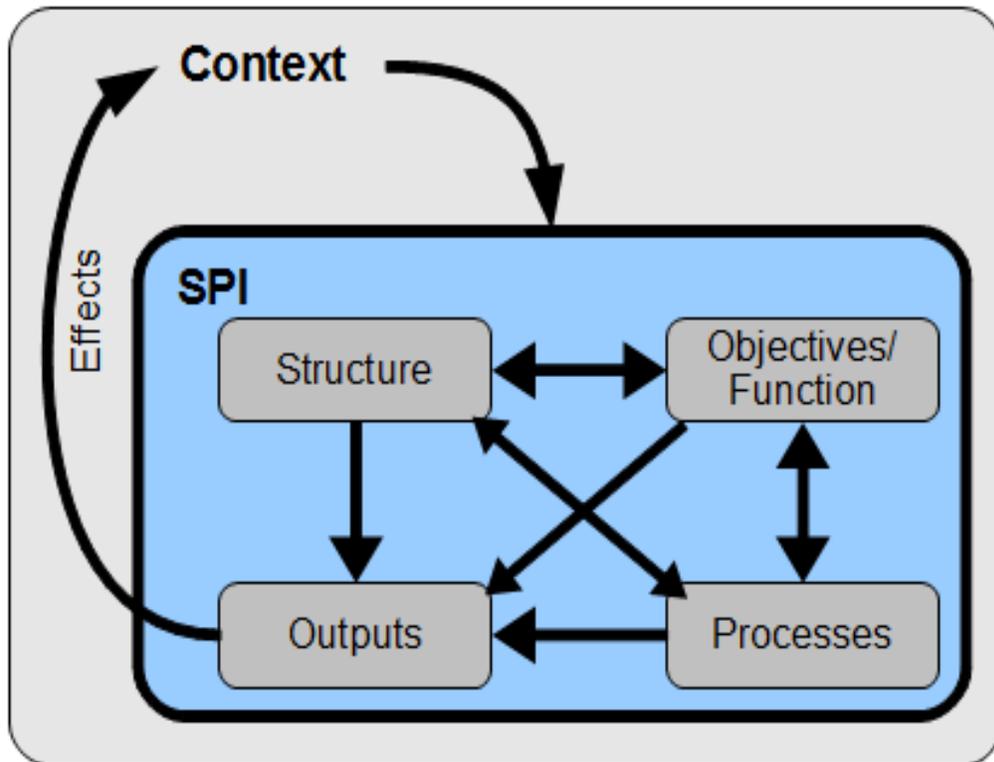
- The **structural features** of SPIs describe how they are set up and the constraints within which the processes are defined

- The **goals/objectives** are central to understanding how and why it operates, and why people participate

- The **processes** of SPIs define the way in which the key functions are actually carried out

- The **outputs and impacts** of SPIs can be characterized by a set of features describing how and when they are prepared and presented and the ultimate outcomes associated with SPIs and the learning, behavioural and policy changes they foster

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Attributes of SPIs

Credibility

- Credibility is the perceived quality, validity and scientific adequacy of the people, processes and knowledge exchanged at the interface

Relevance

- Relevance is the perception of the usefulness of the knowledge brokered in the SPI, how closely it relates to the needs of policy and society, and how responsive the SPI processes are to these changing needs

Legitimacy

- Legitimacy is the perceived fairness and balance of the SPI processes

13 Sarkki, S., Niemelä, J., Tinch, R., van den Hove, S., Watt, A., & Young, J. (2014). Balancing credibility, relevance, and legitimacy: A critical assessment of trade-offs in science-policy interfaces. Science & Public Policy, 41(2), 194-206

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Key challenges of current SPIs

1. **Individuals** often play a **pivotal role** in making SPIs work, committing their time and energy but also **potentially influencing it**. When or if these individuals leave, there is a risk that effort/interest in the SPI may dwindle.

2. **Many actors or institutions** in science and policy continue to tend to operate within a **sector-based silo mentality.**

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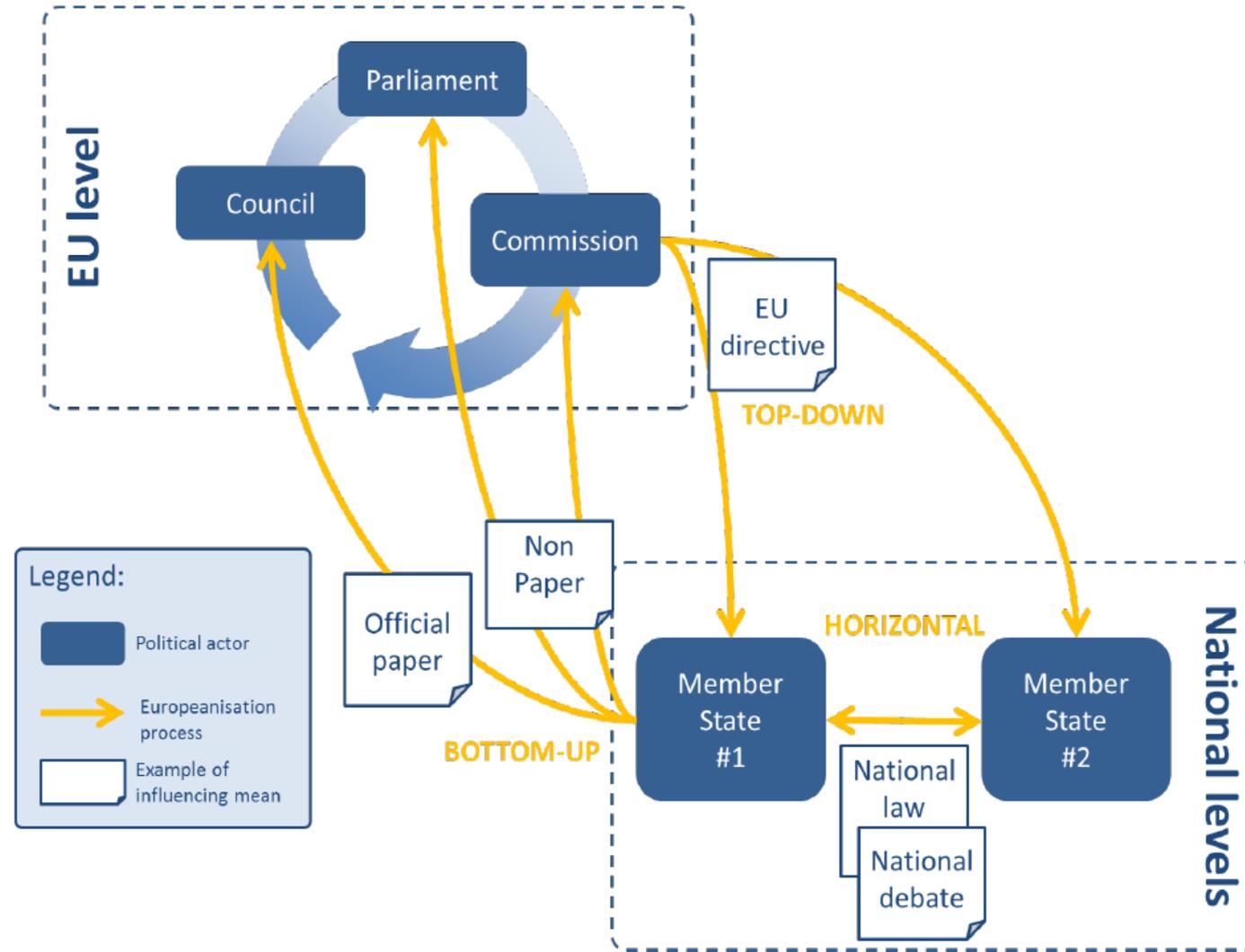
THE POLICY CYCLE

How policies are established

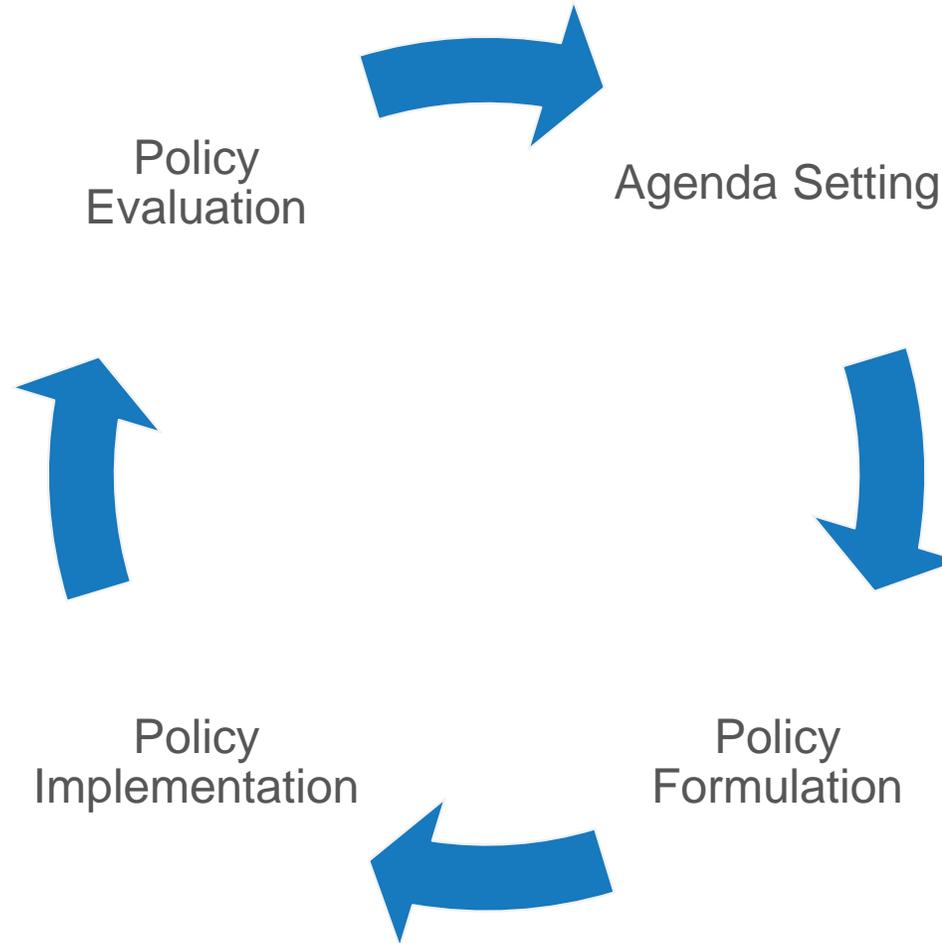Figure from: *Europeanisation of national policy dialogues on energy pathways, Deliverable 4.2. of the ENTRUST H2020 project. (Aze, Dallamaggiore, Salel, Boo, Dunphy, … Costantini, 2016).*
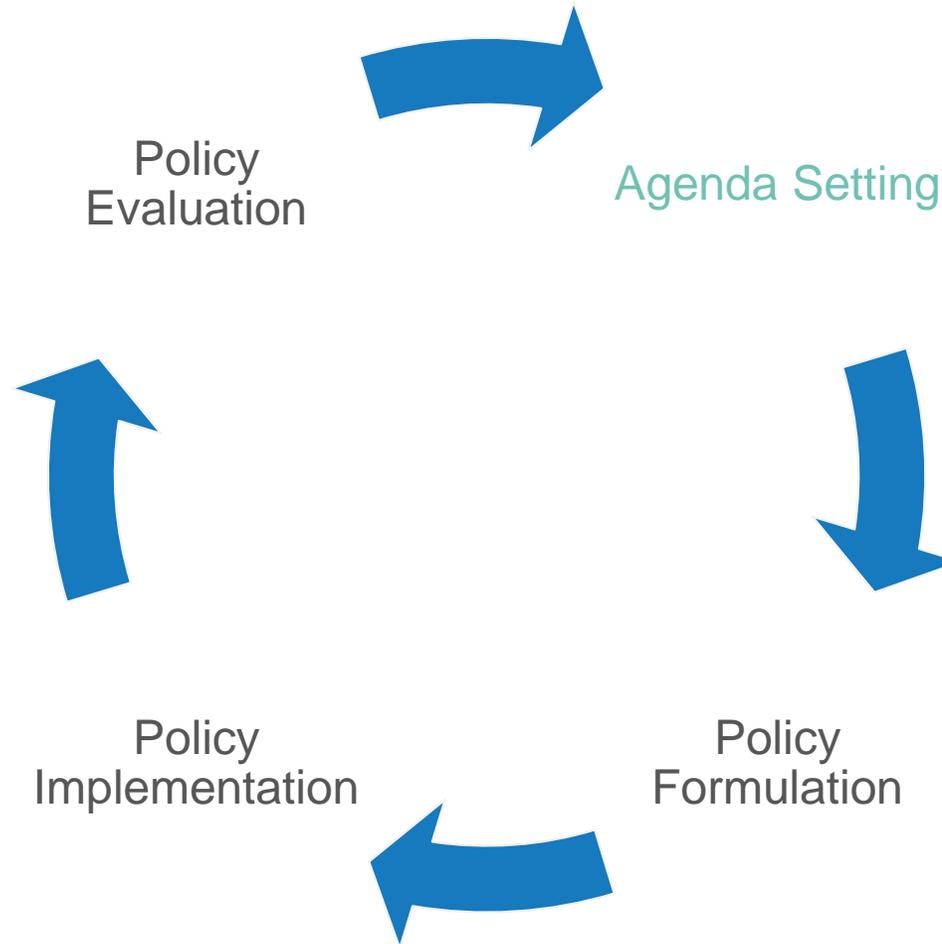
The Policy Cycle

Policy Evaluation

Agenda Setting

Policy Implementation

Policy Formulation

The Policy Cycle (adapted from Barkenbus, 1998)

The Policy Cycle

Policy
Evaluation

Agenda Setting

Recognizes that a problem exists (Subroto, 2011) – issues are pushed into the public domain. Anyone can set the agenda – politicians, civil society, businesses, media…

Policy
Implementation

Policy
Formulation

The Policy Cycle (adapted from Barkenbus, 1998)

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Policy
Evaluation

Agenda Setting
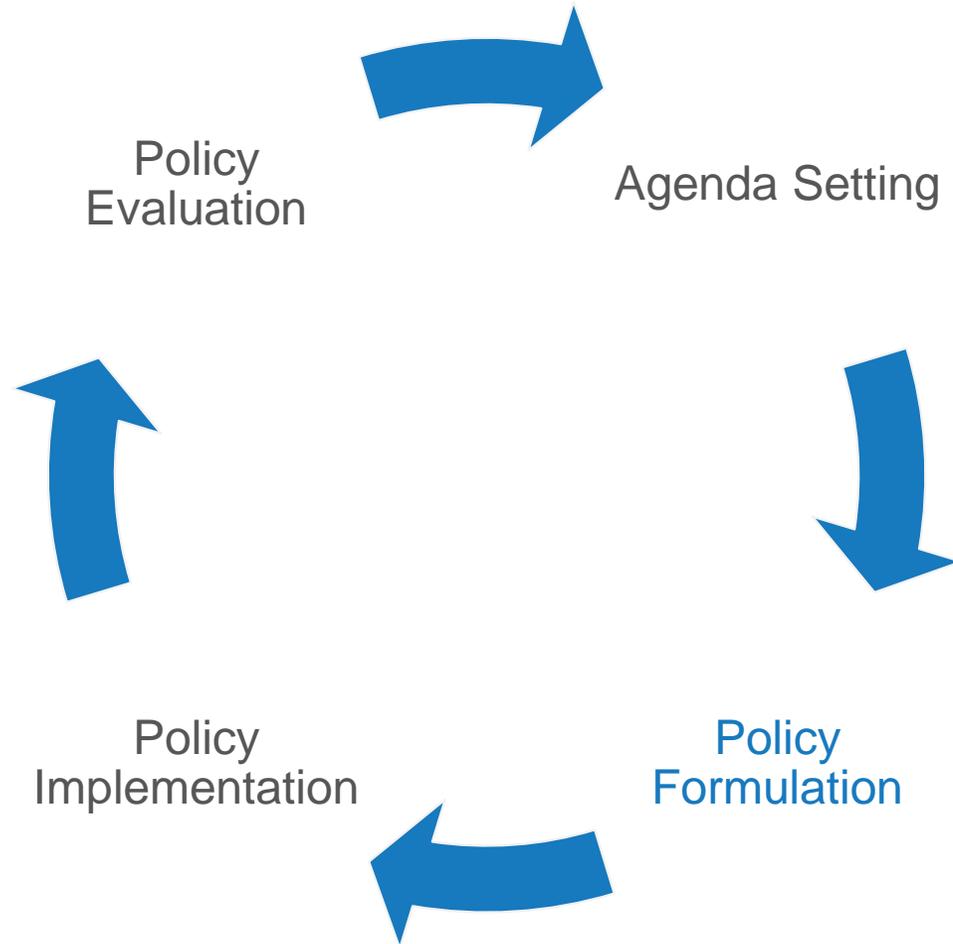
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Formulation

Policy objectives are defined, via CBA, policy analysis, public hearings, judicial evaluations, etc. Decision makers emerge with government programmes to address issues defined in the previous stage (Jann & Wegrich, 2007).

The Policy Cycle (adapted from Barkenbus, 1998)

The Policy Cycle

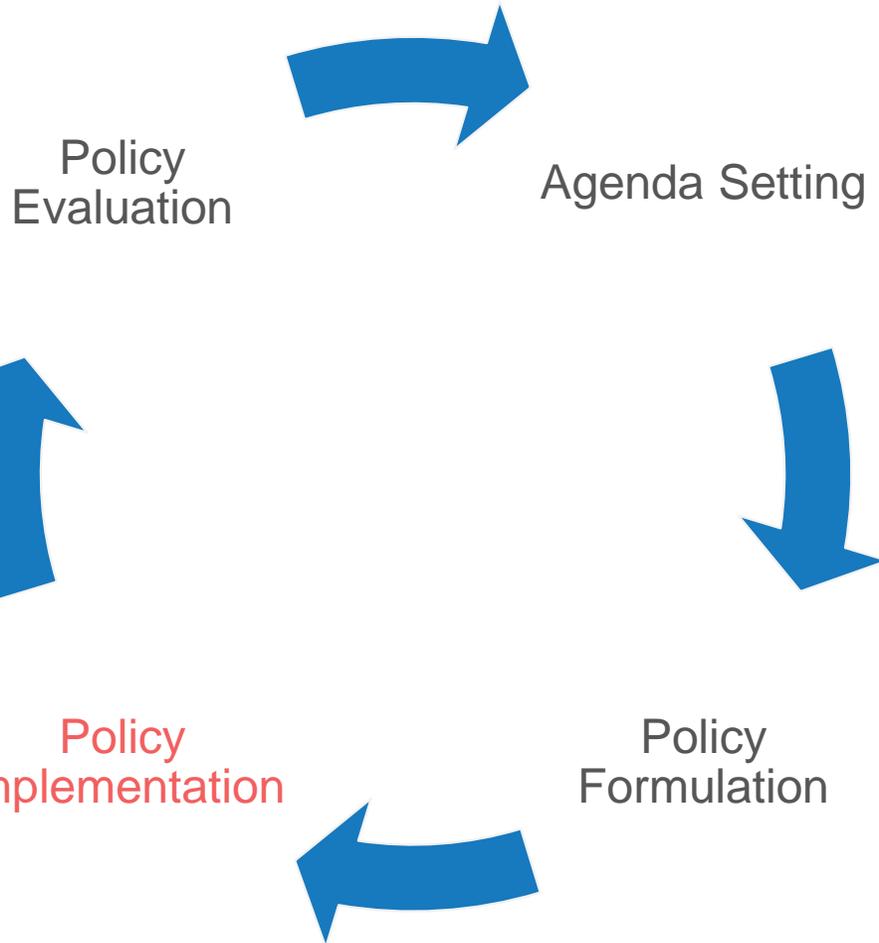Policy Evaluation

Agenda Setting

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Policy Implementation

Policy Formulation

Policies are put into practice. Difficult stage with challenges such as inadequate funding, weak political support, mismatch with existing bureaucracies, etc.

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The Policy Cycle (adapted from Barkenbus, 1998)

The Policy Cycle

Monitoring a policy's performance is critical to its success, although several factors work against this step. Who controls the policy evaluation phase is important, as this will determine whether a policy gets continued, revised, or terminated.
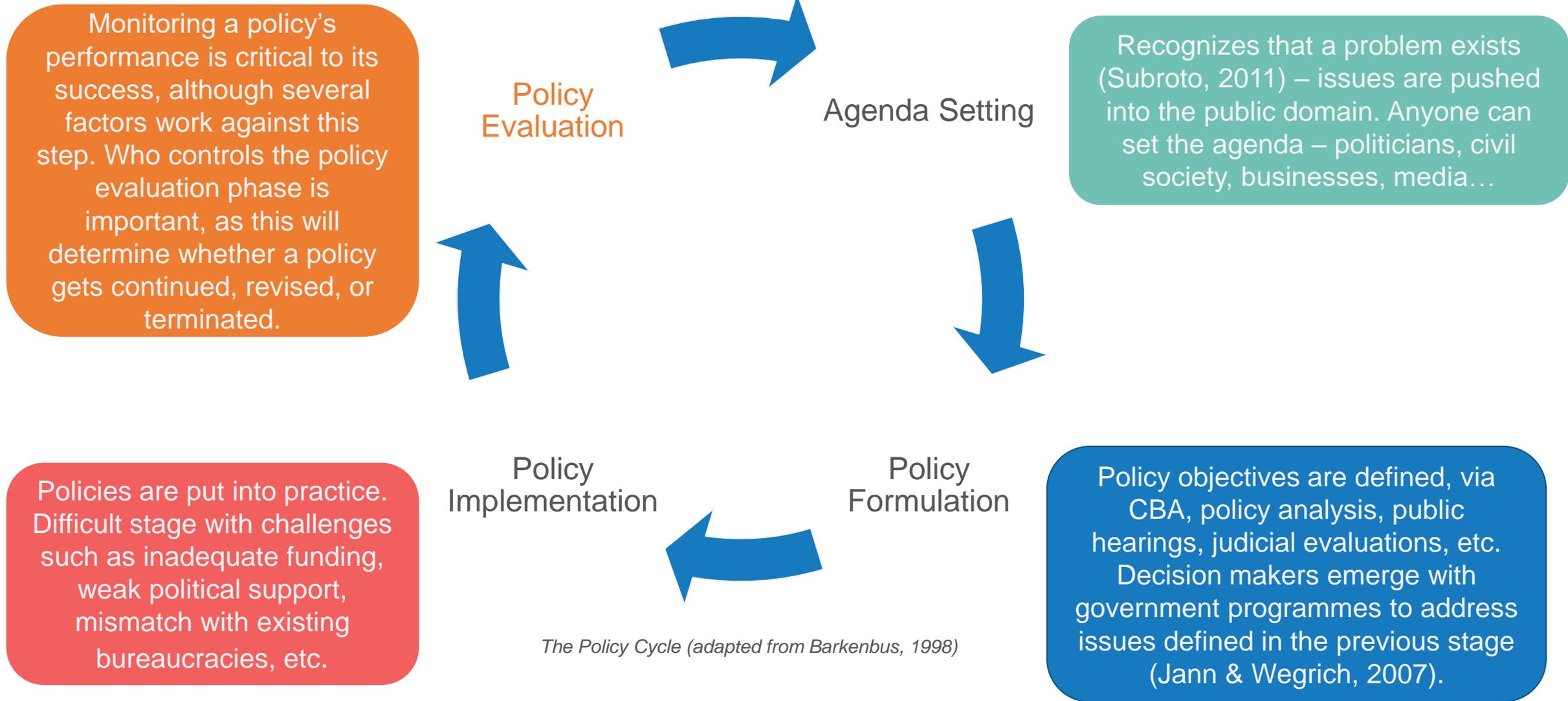
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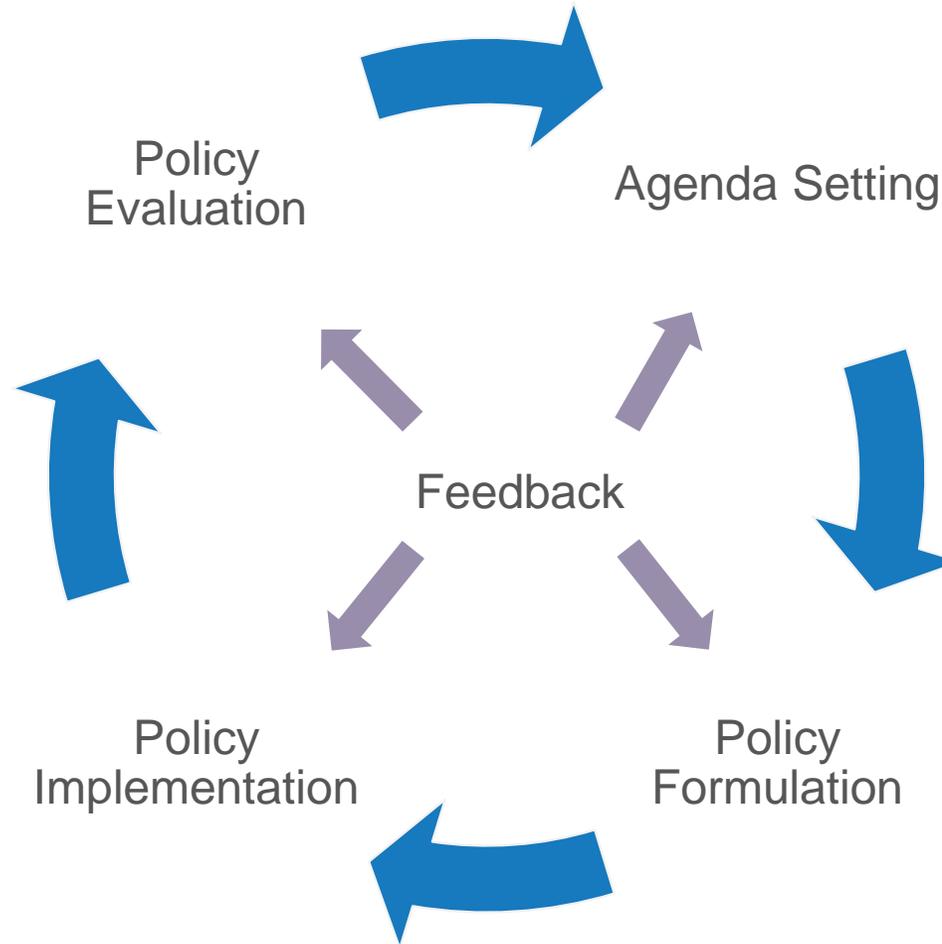
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Agenda Setting

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Feedback

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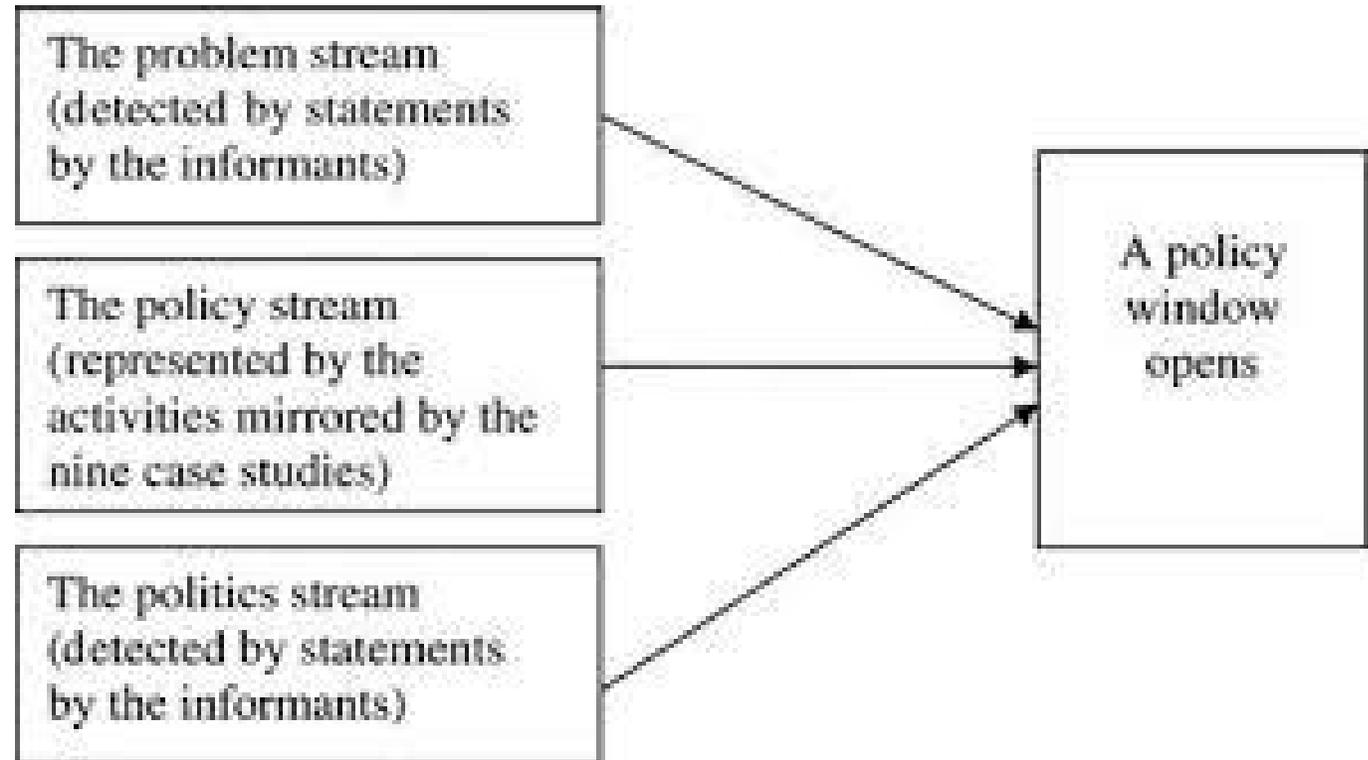*The Policy Cycle (adapted from Barkenbus, 1998)*

Policy window of opportunity

Policies move forward when the three streams align:

1- Problem is defined

2-Potential policies are developed to solve the problem

3-Politics & public opinion (e.g., interest groups) are in favour

This then opens a "window of opportunity" and the three streams push the policy change through.

Kingdon's Agenda Setting Model

The problem stream (detected by statements by the informants)

The policy stream (represented by the activities mirrored by the nine case studies)

The politics stream (detected by statements by the informants)

A policy window opens

Video

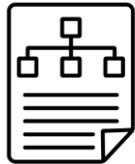**Science-Policy Training**

TOOLS FOR THE POLICY CYCLE

Key tools to apply throughout the policy cycle

Evidence (results)

Dissemination/Communication

Scenarios

Evidence

- **How evidence gets used** can increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of policy engagement efforts.

- Having evidence **readily available in the appropriate format**, and presenting it in the correct way at critical stages along the policy cycle is important.

- Different types of evidence are often needed for different parts of the policy process, and **time considerations** are likely to influence the mechanisms available to mobilize evidence.

- Decisionmakers must have **fast access to critical information from sources they trust**.

- A key factor is the **credibility** of evidence, but also the way in which evidence is **communicated**.

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Tips for producing powerful evidence

Accuracy	Objectivity	Credibility
Generalizability	Relevance	Availability
Rootedness	Practicalities	Timing

Video

Dissemination: Reaching stakeholders

- **Communication** and **communicators** are vital. They must keep in regular contact with stakeholders and work across multiple platforms and offices to publish context-specific information.

- Knowing how to reach the targeted audience is crucial.
  - For non-academic audiences, this means framing messages to **evoke emotion** and demonstrate **usefulness**.
  - Dissemination approaches should be **time-efficient**, aligned with the targeted organization's climate, culture, resources, and skills of its staff members.

- **Stakeholder engagement** in research and evaluation processes will enhance dissemination, particularly for emerging issues.

- Communicators need to **build awareness** of existing or emerging threats or benefits, as decisionmakers may not be aware of the risks or the responsive behaviours/policies to take.

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Dissemination: Reaching policymakers

- The gap between the discovery of knowledge and its application in policy development is due in part to ineffective dissemination.

- Keep in mind that policymakers have unique time horizons and needs for data.

- Policymakers have little time to read material – they rely on party priorities and "real world" stories from their constitutents. It is helpful to provide them with:
  - Locally-relevant information that is understandable, concise, and unbiased.
  - Recommended actions or options, as well as cost-effectiveness or economic impact if available.

- Policymakers rely on staff to help them discern priority information. Staffers of policy makers are therefore a key target audience for dissemination efforts.

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Dissemination: Methods

- Think: dissemination to the wider public is key.

- Make use of existing science-policy dissemination channels and send articles to Science for Environment Policy (the news and information service set up by DG ENV, and other similar SPI channels.)

- Possible actions include:
  - European media (e.g. Euronews);
  - Production of popular or children's books;
  - Social media (e.g., YouTube, Twitter)
  - Online tools such as Eye on Earth.
  - Partnerships for dissemination, including NGOs, professional communicators, Science Museums, Aquaria, Planetaria, etc.

Dissemination: Report vs. Brief

Report

Reports offer valuable details, and can provide both the quantity and quality of evidence needed to influence decision makers. They have the space to communicate the degree of uncertainty and gaps in knowledge.

However, reports are less accessible. Fewer people will read a report.

Brief

Policy-relevant briefs are widely available and attractive to read. They provide a summary of the key points, suggest further reading, and provide a point of contact.

However, briefs must be targeted to specific policies. They must be well-written or will be difficult to understand, as much information gets omitted from a brief.

Scenarios (as part of dissemination/communication)
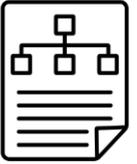
- Scenarios often aim at raising public awareness.
- The goal of scenarios for policymakers is to help them make more informed decisions about which policy to go ahead and implement.
  - It is OK to show only limited options in cases where scenarios are strongly linked to a certain policy development, and when the policy cycle is turning towards implementation.
- Scenarios are more likely to influence the behavior of policymakers if they assess plausible future consequences of real policy choices.
- Use interactive visual tools and maps.

Applying this to biodiversity

- The failure to make progress in sustainably managing biodiversity has been diagnosed as "a collective failure of the science-policy process".

- Biodiversity knowledge is produced in very different ways and organizations, and is used in very different institutional contexts.

- It is important to understand where biodiversity goals may be conflicting with goals of other sectors. Formulating policies using consensus processes will help make policies palatable to wider interests.

- Emerging issues require input from a cross-section of organisations and individuals. Involve people and institutions as "knowledge brokers".

- Informal face-to-face interactions between scientists, administrators and NGOs can also be immensely helpful. Reinforce strategic dialogue.

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THANK YOU

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