

Translating Research to Policy: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward

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Learning goals and objectives

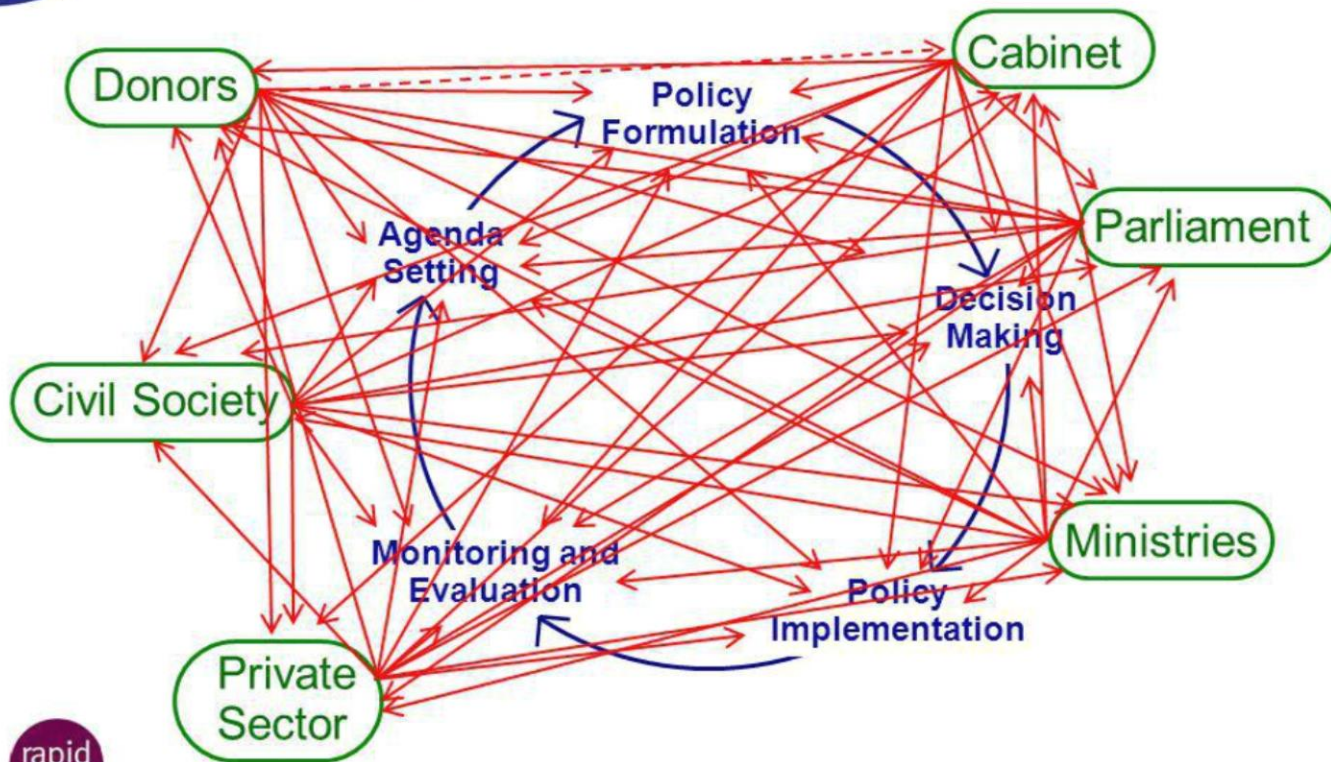
Participants will better understand:

- basic public policy vocabulary
- the multiple points of entry into public policy processes
- the importance of relational work and network awareness
- some organizational issues raised in asserting science in policy processes

Research-to-policy: the simplified story



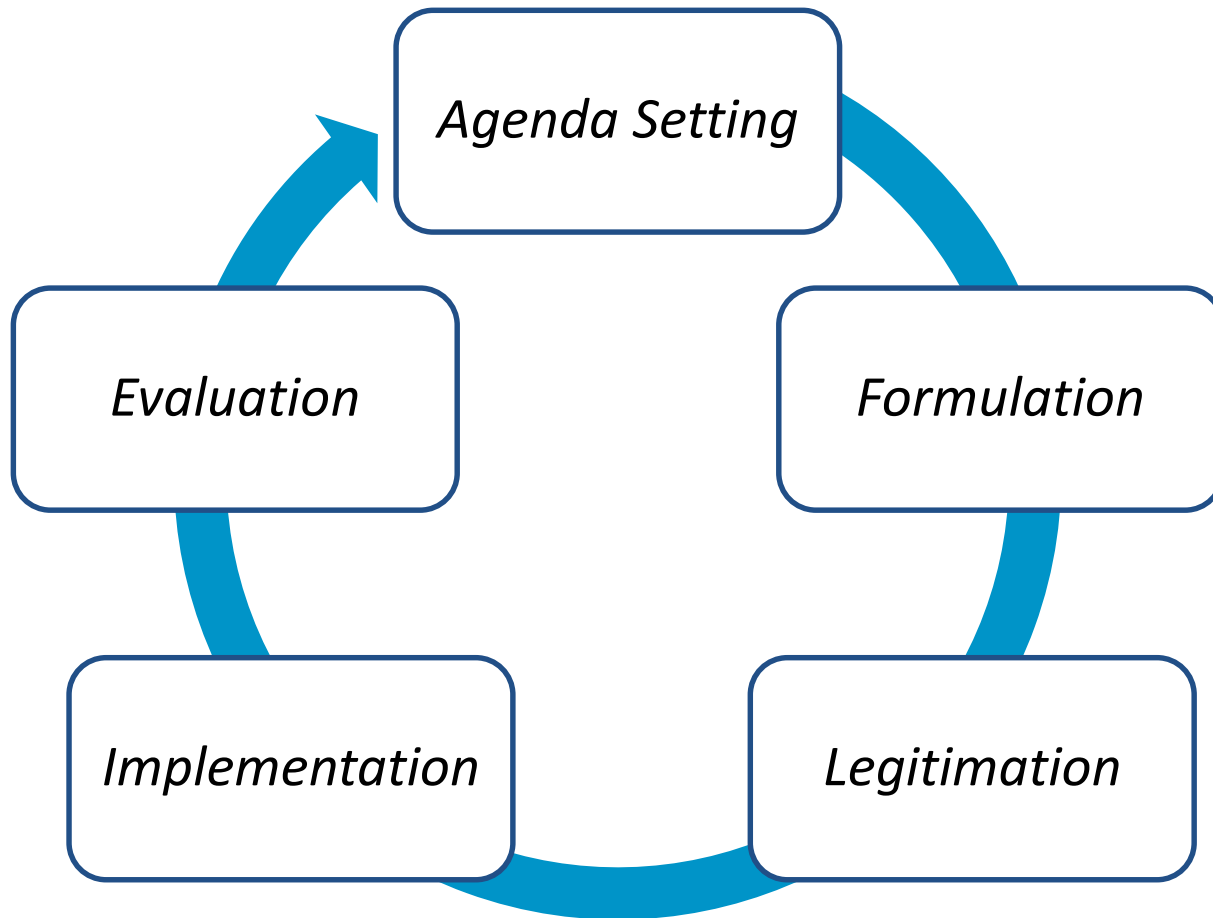
Policy Processes



Lessons Learned

- Multiple points of entry for policy engagement
- Embedding research in relationships/networks
- Assert science and research

Policy process framework



Policy process stages

Policy Process Stage	Types of Activities
<i>Agenda Setting</i>	Bring issues to public awareness Get information to decision-makers Drafting positions, rules, laws, etc.
<i>Formulation</i>	Negotiating and persuading Passing legislation Crafting rules and regulations
<i>Legitimation</i>	Decision-making by proper authorities
<i>Implementation</i>	What actually happens vs. intentions/goals Discretion by 'Street level' bureaucrats Intended and unintended consequences
<i>Evaluation</i>	What worked, what didn't, why? Feedback loop for next round of policy process

Strategies for successful research-to-policy translation

RESEARCH DESIGN

- Targeting information gaps in the policy process
- Synthesis and communication of existing data
- Proof of concept
- Using successful models

Strategies for successful research-to-policy translation

STRATEGIC POLICY ENGAGEMENT

- Building relationships

“I will come back to the partnership... **the fact that this came from and continues to support a local partnership has been helpful.** It’s given me [and the project team] a place to really use our skills and expertise [to be] relevant...keeping us focused on being applied and not getting lost in what still could be very useful research, but maybe not as directly relevant to those [in] the field, on the ground, doing things. And then, **because of the talents and abilities and the ways in which we coordinated connections, and opportunities to talk with regional and state agencies and agency representatives in ways that I may not always have had enough time to do or known who to go to [sic].** But because we, as a partnership, could divide tasks and prioritize towards something in one year, like research, and then shift to some policy engagement the next year, **we were able to move resources and capitalize on each other’s time and expertise.**” (David Lewis, UC ANR)

“The networks of relationships that we brought to bear upon the project were really critical, and that includes a variety of types of relationships... I would encourage attention to the ecological environment in which policy gets implemented or assessed—its about a variety of institutions and networks operating together, not just one agency or state department, so ANR should think about how to operate in that environment.” (Nancy Erbstein, UC Davis)

Language and communication: getting from outputs to outcomes

1. Framing your work to be influential (Goldstein 2009; 4 key steps)
 - Define and describe problem locally, if possible
 - Develop an effective policy solution
 - Develop a convincing message
 - Use research results to educate the right people, the right way, at the right time
2. Dissemination strategies (see Jacobson et al. 2003)

How to build relationships/networks

Key goal: becoming more aware of the policy context in which your research occurs

What does this require:

- Knowing more about the end users or potential end users of the research (Jacobson et al. 2003)
- Knowing more about the networks within which you/your research are embedded (RAPID framework)

Understanding User Context

Jacobson et al. 2003 questions around:

- User group
- The issue
- The research
- The researcher-user relationship

Recognizing and leveraging networks

RAPID FRAMEWORK

- **External environment**
- **Political context**
- **Links**
- Evidence

Relationship/Network Building

- Who are the key stakeholders?
- Who are the key decision-makers?
- What links and networks exist between them?
- Which individuals or institutions have a significant power to influence policy?
- Are these policy actors and networks legitimate—do they represent all interests including the poor? Who's missing?

Asserting Science and Research

“I guess my hope is without comprising ourselves and being on the verge of being advocates for one thing or another is helping people really, truly understand the tradeoffs of a particular decision and with whatever level of analysis we can provide at the time and in time, so that they’re making as an informed decision as they can, and not making it based on values and beliefs. And then invariably that will happen anyway.” (David Lewis, UC ANR)

Concluding thoughts...



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