



Image: https://stock.adobe.com/be_en/images/cape-buffalo-with-lesser-white-egret-looking-for-insects/136472725?prev_url=detail

Icon in page corners: Mutualism icon by Nithinan Tatah, from the Noun Project (<https://thenounproject.com/search/?q=mutualism&i=2369116>)

Navigating Interests in a Science for Policy Environment

Main authors: Marta Sienkiewicz, Marton Hajdu,
Pieter van Nes, Marie-Agnes Deleglise

Contributors: Sharon Munn, Serge Roudier

Key takeaways:

- Science for Policy 2.0 implies close relationships between different actors involved in policymaking. This inevitably creates a space where multiple interests intersect, to a much higher degree than in a basic scientific environment. As such, scientists need to be prepared that their science can be contested and attempts can be made to influence and instrumentalise it for achieving particular goals.
- These interests are of various nature: some are personal interests, values and convictions of the scientists; some come from policymakers, while others from lobbyists, stakeholders or institutions.
- Maintaining a culture of openness, honesty about expectations and entanglements and committed to efforts to increase both legitimacy of expertise and vigilance to undue use or influence is our suggested way forward.



Participating in policymaking requires actively engaging with policymakers and other non-scientific stakeholders. Sometimes this can create a sense of unease in some scientists, for fear of trespassing the norms of scientific integrity. Science for policy is different than the science communicated to academia, in that it becomes part of a system in which different actors, with different interests, participate. Policymakers, stakeholders, institutions and lobbyists all have their interests, and scientists themselves are not free from them.

In a policy context, science is also contested in different ways than in academia. It is scrutinised by lobbies and citizens, often coming under attack. Lobbyists, be it corporate or non-governmental organisations, seek to influence and instrumentalise science for achieving their own goals. The presence of interests in policymaking is inevitable. Therefore, those aspiring to work in Science for Policy 2.0 need to acknowledge and carefully manage them to maintain integrity.

Before considering specific interests in detail, it is vital to stress that the basic principles of scientific integrity must still be applied. Robust science is the precondition for any policy engagement discussed in this book. Therefore, nothing justifies playing with data to fit any particular interest in the policymaking ecosystem. It can happen that scientists may feel the need to artificially fit the scientific facts to policy agendas, to preserve a long-established relationship, gain new influence areas, and secure more impact or funding. The pressure can even directly come from policymakers. This is both ethically inadmissible and diminishes scientists' credibility given that policies and their background science are scrutinised by other actors and observers in the process. Institutional arrangements are important ways to help properly manage such pressures.

Personal Interests, Values and Emotions of Scientists

Traditionally, scientists' role is seen as one of impartial and objective producers of knowledge, removing themselves from any outside influence. However, this understanding of their role has been changing. The value-free ideal of science understood as a fully objective and rational process devoid of emotional and normative entanglements is questioned by science and technology studies (Douglas, 2009; Elliott, 2017). There is a growing understanding that facts are established through a social, culturally-dependent process: which types of claims become facts, with how much evidence behind them, is not universally agreed (Latour and Woolgar, 1979). The complexities and social character of scientific debates, the dynamics between conformism and dissent (de Melo-Martín and Intemann, 2014), make it difficult to make observations outside of a paradigm, which is, however, not infallible (Kuhn, 1962). Scientists have to decide how much evidence is needed for a claim to be accepted and trusted, and the criteria for it are not universal (de Rijcke et al., 2016).

This was visible during JRC's work on defining the scientific criteria for the identification of endocrine disrupting chemicals. Endocrine active substances (EASs) are substances that can interact or interfere with normal hormonal action. When this leads to adverse effects, they are called endocrine disruptors (EDs). The endocrine system is important because it regulates and controls the release of hormones. Scientific knowledge in this area is still growing and, therefore, understanding of what is an EAS/ED continues to be the subject of scientific debate.



The diversity of experts from the Member States tasked with implementing this particular legislation and involved in the process meant a diversity of social and moral values and cultural backgrounds. It is clear that these values influence the judgement on accepting a body of evidence as conclusive and robust enough to make a decision. The other side of the evidence base (what is known) is what is not known, as well as the extent of conflicting evidence or uncertainties. How to conclude in the face of the uncertainties again comes down to value and expert judgements and lies firmly in the centre of the science-policy interface.

Values enter the scientific process in the framing of research questions and objects of study, in decisions about what gets funded, in the selection of data to be collected, the selection of analytical methods and scope of the analysis. They also play a role in deciding what is deemed pertinent to be communicated as important scientific findings, and how they are framed. Therefore, there is also no objective ‘view from nowhere’, because science cannot insulate itself from value judgements and decisions.

Values and emotions can also influence the understanding of one’s role as a scientist, and expectations the public or (some) policymakers place on them. With a common framing of science and technology as the ultimate answer to today’s global problems, scientists can end up feeling the illusion of the ‘white knight’. The interaction between science and policy can appear as an arena to fight against the rise of anti-intellectual, antiscientific and antimedical positions, where scientists are encouraged to speak truth to power (even though this notion has been criticised, see [Chapter 8](#)). This can involve strong emotions, create conflicts of interest (or their perception) in a more ideological and political sense or create pressure and undue influence of values on the scientific process.

None of the above presents a reason to reject science. Deliberate misconduct and willingness to deceive are rare ([Fanelli, 2009](#); [Martinson et al., 2005](#)) and overt scientific fraud remains an antivalue for the scientific community. However, scientists must consider that attaining the value-free ideal of scientific pursuits is not realistic and be more transparent about the role of values in scientific production. Embracing this helps to design mechanisms to keep these interests and values in check and maintain trustworthiness and credibility of researchers involved in policymaking. Below are some suggestions on how to navigate this difficult space, based on JRC’s experience.

- Scientists should work on gaining legitimacy in the policy process

In a policy context of power relations, values and interests, the legitimacy of scientific expertise does not come only from the authority of the scientific process. Scientists need to work to win legitimacy, and especially the democratic legitimacy needed in a policy process.

One way to do it is to become more open to debating one’s results in contexts other than the scientific community, including scrutiny by contesting audiences. Another is to include the diversity of different value positions already at the stage of defining the objects of study. This means

“*There is a growing understanding that facts are established through a social, culturally-dependent process.*”



opening a space of debate not just about the facts but how they are produced, thus helping to mitigate the risk that the scientific process and uncertainties become weaponised in policy debates. Trust in science increases if scientists are engaged and open with the people they want to reach (Oliver and Cairney, 2019). Much of this can be achieved through stages described earlier in this book: working with knowledge communities ([Chapter 7](#)), engaging with citizens ([Chapter 8](#)) and better communication ([Chapter 15](#)).

“

Disrespecting the distinction between advocating for scientific evidence and promoting oneself and one's convictions damages the trust people have in reputable scientific expertise.

”

- Scientists should clearly distinguish when they speak as scientists, and when as citizens or policy advisers

Scientists are just humans embedded in social processes. They have convictions and values which may push them to act more decisively on the basis of their research, whether consciously or not. However, there is a difference between *presenting* scientific results and *concluding advice* on what should be done on their basis. Scientists should not hide from the fact that they have opinions, but their ethos requires that they cultivate self-awareness about where their science ends and their normative opinion on its basis begins. They also must be advocates for the scientific evidence, not for themselves and their convictions. Not all opinions of scientists are ‘the voice of science’ just because they are expressed by representatives of the scientific community. Disrespecting this distinction damages the trust people have in reputable scientific expertise. It has to be clearly communicated, even in informal settings.

- Scientists should not shy away from emotions, especially while presenting their results to nonspecialist public

Emotions and emotional narratives offer potential benefits in communications and engagement with policy actors. The conclusions can be attuned to each audience, their framing, interests and concerns regarding the issue, provided that different messages are not contradictory and misleading. Emotions may help an audience better relate to the facts and grasp their relevance. They also give scientists a good indication of values that lie behind the emotional reactions of policy actors or citizens.

Scientists, just as all humans, cannot switch emotions off, even if disinterestedness is one of the foundational norms of scientific community (Merton, 1942). Trying too hard to suppress emotions in the name of impartiality may counterproductively contribute to biased thinking (Siegel et al., 2018; van ‘t Wout et al., 2010). It is better to train in self-awareness of our emotions and be open about them when they play an important part in our behaviour or narratives.

Policymakers' Interests

First and foremost, contrary to science, policymaking is highly value-based. Expertise plays a role, but any knowledge for policy deriving from science is clearly embedded in society and policy considerations, and thus inevitably gets entangled into debates about values, norms and



political priorities. Policy problems are rarely neat enough to bend themselves to isolated hypothesis testing away from social and political implications (more on this tension in [Chapter 6](#)).

Moreover, policymakers often expect definitive answers and advice on what to do, what course of action to take based on the science. However, science can by definition answer only analytical questions, not the normative ones. A push for decisive policy answers from scientists not only overlooks uncertainty but lies beyond the competence of scientists.

Furthermore, scientists working for policy can discover an ‘inconvenient truth’, i.e., the results which present undesirable knowledge complicating a policy response, or a politically sensitive conclusion. Such a problem has two facets. One is the difficulty of communicating an unexpected, disturbing result to the policymakers, which creates a problem for them and potentially disrupts the relationship scientists have with them. The other is the dilemma of whether to publish such results, which can understandably be motivated by a sense of responsibility towards the public and the scientific community, as well as by the career incentives in science.

Ultimately, each organisation defines the conditions of their relationship with policymakers according to the objectives and expectations. The JRC is independent from EU Member States and any industry or special interests, but is an integral part of the European Commission. Below are the reflections based on our practice.

- Scientists and scientific organisations should choose which type of scientific advisory role they want to occupy

Even when they clearly distinguish facts from opinions, scientists in the policy context operate in a grey zone between informing and aiming to persuade. [Roger Pielke Jr. \(2007\)](#) introduced a useful typology of four roles which scientists working in policy can occupy, depending on their relation to influencing. Those who do not want to attempt any influence are ‘pure scientists’ and ‘science arbiters’, who deliver only the facts, with different levels of attention to the needs of policymakers (the former less, the latter more). ‘Issue advocates’ act without presenting all evidence, instead they tailor the response to sway a decision to one preferred policy solution. ‘The honest broker’ is a scientist who presents a range of relevant facts to different policy alternatives, adapting to what the policymakers want to know, but leaving the choice of solutions to them. In our experience, the honest broker is the most appropriate approach that allows to be useful to policymakers and not overstep scientific impartiality or damage credibility. One can respond with our opinions about the options if requested, but never start from being an issue advocate, especially not a stealth one.

- Scientists can add value as arbiters against the misuse of facts and engaging them as proxies in value-debates

The inferential gap between scientific results and their ‘real-world’ conclusions (i.e., what science says and what it means for policy or society) can cause misuse of scientific

“

Scientists should point out when, from their perspective, the debates about facts and about values are conflated, in particular when an argument based on values is dressed up as driven by the science.

”



evidence, whether deliberate or accidental. One of the strongest arguments for scientists having a role in policymaking discussions is their ability to help policymakers spot misperceptions and distinguish between debates about facts and debates about values. Scientists should point out when, from their perspective, these debates are conflated and in particular when an argument based on values is dressed up as driven by the science. This happens, for instance, when a political disagreement over the objectives of a policy is hidden behind facts brought by different sides to support their preferred, value-motivated option.

Of course, scientists are not always present for those discussions. Policymakers can attempt to mould scientific results to fit their political argument even without the involvement of the scientists. However, researchers working for policy should scrutinise the conclusions drawn from their research and used in public discourse, speaking up in case of inaccuracies or manipulations.

- Scientists should explain the weight of evidence for different policy goals and objectives, instead of giving general advice for action

Due to the inferential gap between what science describes and what these descriptions imply, scientists should not try to make universal policy conclusions from their data. Uncertainty should also be properly communicated in order neither to stall nor to push a policy process too decisively. After all, politicians are used to taking decisions under conditions of uncertainty, indeed almost all political decisions involve some uncertainties. Different policy options for action depend on the end goals and evidence should be discussed in their context, though of course not deliberately prepared to fit them. It should be clear to which goals and values given recommendations apply, with what level of uncertainty.

- Scientists and policymakers should anticipate sensitivity and together agree on ways to manage it

Scientists and policymakers should anticipate if an issue and related research can become sensitive. Gathering policy intelligence (see [Chapter 5](#)) can help scientists to assess it, but communication risks should be carefully discussed together. Safeguarding independence does not mean waging public wars with policymakers who disagree. They should not be surprised by a publication, especially one that challenges their lines. Instead, communicators from both sides should prepare for any public response that may come to it, including defensives, and together decide a position in light of the evidence.

It is best to clarify with policymakers in advance whether researchers will be able to publish these results in scientific papers: the expectations must be made clear. If certain analysis is requested as highly sensitive with restricted access, this should be agreed upfront, not required only after the results.

- Scientific publications must be crafted carefully, focused on evidence and not political assessments

If scientists decide to publish, especially in more risky and politically sensitive areas, it is vital that their papers withstand the harshest scientific scrutiny. This includes both the logic and quality of the methods and data, but also the language. Unnecessary hyperbole falling outside normal scientific language would not pass the test. The JRC is working on an authorisation process for all publications, which is geared towards verifying the scientific quality of our outputs, as this is the primary source of risk to our reputation. In any sensitive cases, it



is advisable to extend the usual internal peer review even beyond a normal procedure, to include a wider variety of perspectives, also nonscientific ones, such as that of communicators.

Unfortunately, the quality of a scientific argument is not something easily translatable to legal criteria. Scientific organisations need to rely on the collective expertise of their teams and their continued commitment to scientific integrity. It is crucial to build a culture of collaboration, debate and internal peer review, even if partly informal. It is therefore best to complement the external, formal peer review with internal mechanisms of help and scrutiny. For optimal results, such review should go beyond scientific scrutiny, to include also advice from communications and policy liaisons, to ensure that the message intended by the scientists will be understood by other audiences.

The advice on the two points above applies to scientific publications of our results, not opinion pieces, especially those commenting on specific proposals for EU policy lines. The exceptions to these rules are much more black-and-white situations: revealing information that has not been made public, causing prejudice to the interest of the organisation, or violating the principles of loyalty and impartiality. The last two points most likely would require a case-by-case judgement which is determined by the cultural context of a specific organisation.

- Scientists should weigh pros and cons of policy engagement in particular situations

Organisations can also consider not engaging in policy support, if the pressure is too big or the risk of distortion of science for ‘policy-based evidence’ too high. There are multiple sources of evidence and if scientists suspect misuse of the results, or are adamant about publishing regardless of the sensitivities, there is no obligation to accept a request for policy collaboration. Developing in-house integrity codes conforming with international standards gives a transparent reference point to the acceptable conditions in which an organisation engages in policy support.

External Interests: Lobbyists and Other Interest Representatives

When a scientific organisation gets more involved in policymaking and moves towards Science for Policy 2.0, it gradually becomes more influential in the policymaking process. As such, it will increasingly become the target of influencing attempts itself. Corporate lobbyists, NGOs and other interest representatives will inevitably seek to engage it to further their own goals. It is therefore vital that scientists become aware of the issues that can arise with regards to external lobbying (lobbyists and lobbying should be understood here as catch-all terms for anyone involved in advocacy on behalf of any organisation or particular interest and for the activity they carry out, be it classical lobbying, interest representation or advocacy).

The Place of Lobbying in the Policymaking Process

Lobbying to influence the policymaking process is not inherently wrong or illegitimate. Quite the contrary, in a democracy, people and organisations should have a right to know and influence how policies that will affect their life and their bottom line are made. Article 11 of the Treaty on the European Union prescribes that ‘citizens and representative associations [shall



have] the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action' and the EU 'institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society' while the European Commission (of which the JRC forms a part) 'shall carry out broad consultations with parties concerned in order to ensure that the Union's actions are coherent and transparent'.

Lobbyists can bring to the table legitimate viewpoints, including aspects of the science that may otherwise be overlooked or simply not available – this is especially true for corporate scientists who often benefit from generous funding and access to proprietary data. However, unlike scientists providing policymakers with impartial evidence, lobbyists will always serve a particular interest. Sometimes this means engaging in illegitimate activities and exploiting scientific uncertainty to frustrate legislative efforts aimed at regulating their industries (Bramoullé and Orset, 2018). It is true that regulation is often a zero sum game with serious amounts of money on the line, and lobbyists have been known to exploit scientific uncertainty and produce narratives based on 'bad science' to convince the public, politicians and policymakers to alter, delay or completely halt regulation. This has been the case, for example, with tobacco and lung cancer (Proctor, 2012) or more recently with climate change and fossil fuels (Hoggan and Littlemore, 2009).

“
Scientists must be aware when they are 'being lobbied' and they must carefully consider what they share, who they collaborate with and what they accept.
”

Why Are Scientists Lobbyists' Potential Target?

In representing their organisations or clients, lobbyists aim to achieve two main objectives: gather intelligence about the policymaking process and sway policymakers and politicians and the public by providing relevant information and arguments. As argued in Chapter 5, intelligence gathering is important because it helps to prepare and fine-tune further lobbying activities and it also helps the organisation, for example, a manufacturing firm, to adapt to upcoming legislative or regulatory changes, such as the ban of certain ingredients used by the firm.

Given these two objectives, engaging scientists as evidence providers can be beneficial for lobbyists on both counts. Scientists closely involved in the policymaking process will typically possess privileged information that they provided to or received from policymakers or that they become aware of through their cooperation with them. This can include information on the policy options being considered or already discarded; the assessment of their expected impacts; the stakeholders being consulted and even the arguments other stakeholders presented in the process, possibly including trade secrets.

Furthermore, the evidence scientists provide to policymakers can also be influenced, for example, by calling attention to and explaining research results previously unknown to the scientist; sharing proprietary data and research results otherwise inaccessible to the scientist or merely providing compelling arguments and narratives in support of a particular course of action.

None of the above is inherently problematic or illegitimate. Scientists, however, must be aware when they are 'being lobbied' and they must carefully consider what they share and what they accept.



Who Are Lobbyists?

There is no universal job description for a lobbyist: anybody could be considered a lobbyist if he or she advocates for a particular interest and seeks to influence policymaking or gather intelligence for their organisation's benefit. They are often highly skilled experts in their field. They may wear a suit and present a business card with the logo of a company or an industry association, but they may equally wear jeans and work as a journalist for a trade publication, or as a blogger, an NGO activist or a think tank analyst. And they may just as well wear a white coat and do research in a laboratory – possibly funded and steered by private interest (Steele et al., 2019).

While scientists aim to spend most of their time doing research, lobbyists spend most of their time building and managing their network to establish and nurture long-term relationships. Classical lobbyists are easier to spot, but interest representatives wearing multiple hats are more difficult to identify. This is also the reason why the EU transparency register puts an emphasis on what one does rather than who they are, but it is by no means certain that all the people who do lobbying register. Developing policy intelligence, or a 'helicopter view' can help identifying lobbyists, because certain positions will be more typically held by representatives of certain interest groups. For example, for profit health care providers or paying organisations would care more about the economic impact of legislation while patient groups would focus on health outcomes.

With many different stakeholders in the field, scientists and their organisations should learn a little bit about the main issues, opinions and constraints of each group in order to be able to identify them but also to better understand their positions and possibly benefit from their insights.

Dealing With Lobbyists

In general, a public policy organisation should be open to overtures by lobbyists for the reasons detailed earlier but risks as well as costs should be carefully considered in defining an organisation's own rules of engagement with lobbyists. In the case of the JRC, our staff must comply with financial, ethical and other rules and guidelines of the European Commission which, as a political and policymaking body, is a major target for lobbying activities. For any organisation it is true that staff must be made aware of the relevant rules through continuous training, and regular discussion of specific cases is advisable with management if doubt arises.

Within those constraints, the prevailing practice in the JRC is to be open and willing to engage with lobbyists. In order to manage the risks inherent in such engagement, conducting due diligence on partners and professional acquaintances is a must: it is a good idea to enquire about who they work for and who they receive funding from and verify if they are listed in the relevant national or EU level registers for lobbyists. Different levels of engagement will require different levels of scrutiny, and overly bureaucratic approaches should be avoided, but a critical approach to industry-funded research is important (Steele et al., 2019).

At the lowest level of sensitivity, it is advisable to maintain summary records of meetings and exchanges with lobbyists. As the level of sensitivity increases, more stringent record keeping, including the registration of written exchanges, is advisable as well as advance consultations with policymakers. Finally, in cases where stakeholders are involved in decision-making processes, clear, transparent conflict of interest rules must be put in place to safeguard scientific integrity and ensure the citizen centricity of the scientific process.



Going beyond procedural safeguards, and keeping in mind that ‘lobbyists’ also include top scientists and experts employed by organisations trying to promote their own narratives, the importance of ensuring scientific integrity and scientific excellence cannot be emphasised enough. In order to be perceived as credible by all stakeholders, a science for policy organisation cannot afford to be seen as offering anything less than sound evidence based on the best available science. Those with opposing interests will scrutinise our advice for possible flaws or shortcomings and use them to attack the policy itself. This includes issues in the grey zone of scientific uncertainty or issues that arise because of differences between the EU and other regulatory systems. In such cases, scientists must be prepared to supply policymakers with sound counterarguments as to why alternative approaches may be feasible in other jurisdictions but not in the EU. This approach requires that science for policy organisations develop the already mentioned policy intelligence which allows them to see beyond the science and anticipate policy issues.

Finally, trust is important throughout the science–policy interactions, and not less crucial in this respect. Strong, trust-based relationships with policymakers can help to anticipate lobbying efforts and provide guidance in responding to them as well as identify narratives used by lobbyists which are based on ‘bad science’. It is particularly useful when scientists are able to explain to policymakers the uncertainties and half-truths behind them and purposes they serve.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Personal Conflicts of Interest

Strong collaboration between science, policy, citizens and relevant stakeholders heightens the risk of conflicts of interest. The [OECD \(2005, p. 13\)](#) states that a conflict of interest involves ‘a conflict between the public duty and the private interest of a public official, in which the official’s private-capacity interest could improperly influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities’. It can be extrapolated to scientists working for policy, whether they are officially public servants (like scientists in the JRC) or external collaborators.

A conflict of interest often creates uneasiness, it is considered as something irregular to stay away from. In fact, the term only describes a situation without giving any value judgement. The real issue with conflicts of interest is not to avoid it, but to recognise and manage it (see [OECD, 2005](#) for a detailed toolkit, and [Thagard, 2007](#) for some strategies). Any conflict of interest can be discovered and voluntarily defused before any corruption occurs. As [Ravetz \(1999, p. 648\)](#) puts it, the integrity of scientists ‘lies not in their “disinterestedness”, but in their honourable behaviour as stakeholders’.

Conflicts of interest can be considered in terms of economic drivers, but the ideological and political aspects are particularly worth considering in science for policy collaborations. Ensuring diversity of advice is important, albeit without falling into the trap of false representation of the ‘two sides of the argument’ ([Oreskes and Conway, 2010](#)). Members of the experts groups



working with the European Commission need to declare more than just their financial incentives, namely also their intellectual property rights, membership of managing bodies, public statements and positions and interests of their immediate family ([Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, 2019](#)).

Culture, risk appetite and ‘the tone at the top’ are vital aspects in how an organisation tries to manage conflicts of interest. Once the interests are declared, people in question may need to refrain from trying to influence the decision process, act on the side line or even give up the role for a particular file. Even the perceptions or suspicions of conflict of interest can be damaging, putting in question the credibility of the scientific input. Sometimes, not all parties can agree on what constitutes it, and can contest the declarations.

Institutional Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest arise not only on the personal level but also need to be managed as part of the co-creation with institutional stakeholders involved in a policy or scientific advice process. In response to these, we have developed a successful ‘Sevilla process’, to manage various interests by involving all stakeholders.

The process concerns establishing secondary legislation on complex technoeconomic issues including on product policy, industrial emissions or waste. The ‘Sevilla process’ is particularly applied for establishing the Best Available Techniques (BAT) under the Industrial Emissions Directive (2010/75/EU). BAT are the most effective technique of achieving a high level of protection of the environment when it comes to industrial emissions. We create spaces where all stakeholders involved are treated equally and their input, which is based on robust technoeconomic evidence, is impartially taken into account. The key principles are

- All stakeholders are actively involved from the very start of the work up to and including the final decisions on BAT.
- Co-creation with stakeholders (of the BAT reference documents – the so-called BREFs) and consensus decision-making (on the BAT conclusions) are at the heart of the process.
- The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (including of the JRC) in the process are clearly assigned and laid out.
- A rigorous, open and participatory process is in place to collect and verify the necessary information and data from which the BAT conclusions are derived.
- The complex technoeconomic discussions are led by a highly competent, neutral and credible entity, in this case the JRC’s European Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (EIPPCB) Bureau, and sufficient time is provided for the discussions to decide on BAT.



Making Things Public: Open and Transparent

In an environment in which science is often contested and forcefully entangled in policy battles, being open gives a chance to win legitimacy and build trust in the evidence-informed nature of the process. It is vital not only for presenting final results of research or policy design; the process used for arriving at these results should also be open for scrutiny, and inclusive of citizens and stakeholders voices, given that the impact of policy is public and concerns many.

While ‘transparency’ is a well-known and codified principle, we prefer to talk about fostering an open attitude and making things public, rather than making them transparent. Being transparent is not synonymous with being open and willing to engage, and brings a connotation of making things close to invisible.

Openness is crucial, especially for science for policy: because of the impacts of policy on the public, both the policy solution and the science behind it must be discussed in the public space. It helps to guarantee legitimacy of the scientific input by minimising the unfounded perceptions of conflicts of interest. It also presents a fuller picture of a policy co-creation process and prevents blaming scientific inputs for policy failure. It is an underlying principle of Science for Policy 2.0, one that is realised through citizen engagement, inclusion of diverse actors in defining research questions, collaboration with knowledge communities, among others. It helps increase the quality of evidence-informed policymaking, in an era where facts are often disputed.

“

Being transparent is not synonymous with being open and willing to engage.

”