About the PSI-connect project

PSI-connect is a collaborative R&D project funded by the European Commission under the FP7 programme. Project members developed, tested and disseminated knowledge brokering practices, offering opportunities to improve the quality and value of interactions between scientists, river basin managers and policy makers in the field of water management.

Project coordinator

Adriaan Slob
TNO, Innovation and Environment
P.O. Box 49
NL-2600 AA Delft

Tel: +31 88 866 8308
Fax:+31 15 269 6840

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The PSI-connect partners

TNO · CRS · Cranfield University · USF Institute of Environmental Systems Research · PIK · VITUKI Budapest · Deltares

www.psiconnect.eu

Useful contacts

Project partners with experience in the design and implementation of knowledge brokering instruments and processes are listed below:

TNO, Innovation and Environment
P.O. Box 49, NL-2600 AA Delft
Netherlands
Tel: +31 88 866 8308
Contact – Adriaan Slob

CRS - Centre for Systems Solutions
Parkowa 46/1, 51-616 Wroclaw
Poland
Tel: +48 71 345 9284
Contact – Piotr Magnuszewski

PIK - Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research
Telegrafenberg, 14412 Potsdam
Germany
Tel: +49 331 288 2416
Contact – Cornelius Laaser

University of Osnabrueck, USF
Barbarastr. 12, D-49069 Osnabrueck
Germany
Tel: +49 541 969 2536
Contact – Claudia Pahl-Wostl

Further information

PSI-connect booklet available in hard copy and at the project's website

www.psiconnect.eu

Tools and processes to facilitate collaboration across policy and science

Applications in the field of water management

PSI-CONNECT · SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

www.psiconnect.eu

The value of knowledge brokering

Knowledge brokering processes help to bridge the gap between water policy / management and science communities leading to both better evidenced interventions and better informed research agendas in water management / water policy. As an explicitly learning process, implementation of the Water Framework Directive can be facilitated through the use of knowledge brokering instruments.

'Knowledge brokering has shown me possible ways to solve complex problems in the real world'.

'As a scientist I better understand the problems policy makers struggle with every day and how to better cooperate'.

'The training helped me to learn new methods that I can use in my work'.

(Quotes from PSI-connect training participants, 2011)

- → Encourages and values stakeholder participation
- → Supports sharing and co-creation of knowledge
- → Supports practical problem solving
- → Inlfuences policy development and implementation

Knowledge brokering instruments

What are KBIs? Knowledge Brokering Instruments (KBIs) offer an innovative and effective communication channel between policy-makers, scientists and stakeholders.

What types of KBI are available? There are many types of KBIs; The PSI-connect project tested and improved the value of group model building, scenario planning and simulation and role-playing games.

When should KBIs be used? Whenever a certain policy issue is "urgent", incidents occur, or a policy development is planned.

How are KBIs used? Involve the stakeholders from the early stages, choose and adapt the KBI (or combination of KBIs) to the specific problem context and execute a KBI workshop providing a space for exchange and creation of knowledge.

Who should guide the use of KBIs? KBIs should be designed and implemented by skilled and experienced independent facilitators with knowledge of both the KBI and the problem context.

Factors that influence policy-science connection

- **Making contact and getting connected** – starts with building mutual trust and commitment to sustain the knowledge brokering process.
- **Time** – stakeholders must allow for the time necessary for knowledge brokering activities.
- **Timing** – ensures that a topic can be discussed and debated effectively within the policy process given the relative importance of the topic to the various stakeholders (internal and external) and their own internal decision making processes.
- **Commitment & facilitative leadership** – secures personal and institutional enthusiasm from influential actors. Facilitative leadership is performed by a person who has a good overview of the policy issues and their timing.
- **Fitness for purpose** – ensures the nature of the knowledge brokering process and the timing of its use are complementary with the target policy development / intervention initiative. Research flexibility is a requirement.
- **Stakeholder participation** – acknowledges different perspectives of the problem and solutions, which is crucial for both research and policy-making processes.
- **Face to face interaction** – builds trust in relationships, fosters co-creating knowledge and sharing experiences and allows developing a common language (supporting development and consistent use of an agreed set of common terms and definitions amongst stakeholders).
- **Output orientation** – provides regular, timely and meaningful contributions to support all stakeholders in their work. If new institutional structures are required to implement the output, a "sponsor of change" at a high level in the organisation is needed.