



## Concept Note

# Science-Policy Interface – Improving data for DRR Concept Note

25 November 2021, 15:00h – 16:15h CET

### State of play

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented societies and governments with unprecedented challenges, where well-worn patterns of action have proven to be insufficient. At the same time the collective experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has provided an unprecedented opportunity to examine the relationship between science, policy and the wider society, in what is often called the science-policy-society interface, regarding awareness of the systemic nature of disaster risks.

The pandemic has shown that the Science–Policy-Interface (SPI) can be different from just a linear transfer of knowledge from experts to policymakers. The role of science had to be reformulated from a behind-the-scenes advisory role to being an active social discourse participant. The scientific community had to use their authority to support imposed preventative measures and address new challenges such as disinformation. National, sub-national and supra-national responses have diverged widely, based on different scientific interpretations and how to address these leading to a more sophisticated view of SPI.

Well-functioning SPI should be dynamic ecosystems of organizational arrangements, institutionalized processes with access to modern methods of collecting and analyzing data (such as use of remote sensing, satellites, drones, geographical information systems, AI big data for DRR), which serve to structure the relationships of diverse actors around complex policies to address systemic risks.

Informed by the lessons learned from management of the COVID-19 crisis and the increasing effects of the climate emergency, this session aims to investigate three key priorities focusing on the science policy interface for disaster risk reduction:

- 1. How is the SPI efficiently taking shape in formal governmental settings such as panels, advisory committees, national platforms or other institutional structures? Analysis might be done through the presentation of experiences from the European Commission, DG ECHO knowledge network, and Member States.**
- 2. How is the SPI evolving and what are the new tools available to generate evidence-based solutions that are easier to incorporate into national policies, decisions or investments, with a dedicated focus on climate change? Conversely, what are the new challenges induced by the significant increase of information sources and supports, disinformation, fake news?**
- 3. How can the scientific community support global efforts to reach a new and reliable evidence-based understanding of the dynamic nature of systemic risks, establishing new structures to govern risk in complex, adaptive systems, often in a context of uncertainty?**

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| <p><b>Session objectives</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of participants about the institutionalization of scientific actors in governmental structures;</li> <li>• Presentation of case studies, lessons learned and gaps related to the role of science during the COVID-19 crisis and the climate emergency;</li> <li>• Identify ways forward to improve scientists and policymakers' coordination for better policy impact, adaptation to populations' and practitioners' needs, including anticipation of future risks.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Questions to be addressed</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main barriers which prevent a stronger and better use of scientific findings for informing populations, and developing ad hoc policies and investments?</li> <li>• How does the internet, social networks and unreliable information influence risk understanding and trigger underestimation of risks?</li> <li>• What are lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic that can facilitate a more structured and institutionalized interface between Science and Policy?</li> <li>• How can science communicate about uncertainty and respond to the increased need for evidence, in order to inform citizens and policies?</li> <li>• How can policy makers be encouraged to make further use of scientific evidence and better coordinate actions with experts and scientists, especially in liaison with the climate emergency?</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Expected outcomes</b></p>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants learn about the current status of SPI in Europe and how scientists and government are successfully working together to improve public policy in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and the climate emergency; Participants receive details about the new mechanisms and tools to improve cooperation and how these are making a difference;</li> <li>• Participants are aware of how scientists and experts are producing evidence and knowledge which are more directly relevant in support of policy makers; Participants receive details about how governments are building up scientific contributions;</li> <li>• Participants learn about how both scientists and policymakers could better coordinate their bilateral and public communications, to instill public trust in those policies adopted. Participants receive details about opportunities and challenges linked to evidence-based communications.</li> <li>• The session outcomes would be re-elaborated and consolidated into a practical guidance document on the Science Policy Interface, under the UNDRR Words into Action (WiA) umbrella, and through a multi-stakeholder knowledge sharing process.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Background documents</b></p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESTAG paper, 2021: Science–Policy Interface in Disaster Risk Reduction in Europe and Central Asia</li> <li>• ESTAG paper, 2021: Multi-stakeholder approaches to complex risks and policy coherence – a sampled screening of Europe and Central Asia</li> <li>• IBC paper, 2021: Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation</li> <li>• JRC publication, 2020: Science for DRR management <a href="https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Knowledge/Science-for-DRM/Science-for-Disaster-Risk-Management-2020">https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/Knowledge/Science-for-DRM/Science-for-Disaster-Risk-Management-2020</a></li> <li>• JRC publication, 2016 Science Policy Interfaces in Disaster Risk Management in the EU: Requirements and conditions for efficient SPIs in practice <a href="https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC104362">https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC104362</a></li> </ul>   |

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