



**Think  
2030**

Science-policy  
solutions for a more  
sustainable Europe

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PRESIDENCIA ESPAÑOLA  
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16.11.2023 Session Brief

**Science for policy –**

**How to engage with policy  
makers?**



# Science for policy – How to engage with policy makers?

The [Think2030 Dialogue Spain](#), held on 16 November 2023, gathered decision-makers and analysts from policy, business, and research communities across Europe to debate the key sustainability issues at stake for EU policy. The Think2030 Dialogue Spain is one of several activities within the Think2030 platform, created by [the Institute for European Environmental Policy](#) in 2018 to provide science-policy solutions for a more sustainable Europe.

As part of the Think2030 dialogue, [JPI Climate](#) “Connecting Climate Knowledge for Europe” organized a session titled “*Science for policy – How to engage with policy makers?*”. The present brief tries to summarize the main discussion points and provide the main take-aways and recommendations from the session.

**Lead:** JPI Climate

**Moderator:** Frank McGovern, Senior Scientist of the Irish Environmental Protection Agency EPA and Vice-Chair of JPI Climate

**Introduction by:**

- Petra Manderscheid, Executive Director JPI Climate

**Panelists**

- Myles Allen, Oxford Martin Programme on Post Carbon Transition
- Samantha Burgess, Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S)
- Elena Lopéz Gunn, Member of the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (ESABCC)
- Etienne Hannon, Belgium Climate Center (BCC)
- Nadia Pinardi, European Knowledge Hub on Sea Level Rise
- Martijn Pakker, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

## Key recommendations

- **Science is fundamental to our understanding of climate change.**

It is **fundamental in informing effective actions** to address its causes and consequences.

- **Timely access to current and authoritative scientific information is essential for informing responses at all scales by public and private sector actors, institutes, and citizens.**

Access to the latest scientific information and insights should be assured and implemented in a structured manner.

- **Science advice bodies play a key role in providing knowledge for policymakers.**

The Science advice bodies, think-tanks or research institutes act as **mediators between science and policy**.

- **Structured and regular dialogues enabling a two-way communication between science, policy and practitioners are key.**

**Scientists should engage in the different steps of the policy cycle; to foster mutual understanding and respect as well as trust.**

State of art knowledge that is useful for policymaking should be developed in **co-creation between science and policy** as well as citizens and can lead to the joint development of convincing, positive narratives.

### Summary of policy session 3

The panel discussion was introduced by a presentation of JPI Climate work's to accelerate the transfer of climate knowledge from science to policy via the [Equinox Process](#) and the first Summit convened by the Belgium State Secretary of Research and Climate Minister in March 2023 which gathered key European scientists with government representatives. Chair of the IPCC Jim Skea confirmed it being a significant and timely initiative for Europe to enhance the science policy interaction.

Myles Allen focused on what we can learn from the IPCC process at the European level in this dialogue; he called for more cooperation agreements from the governments, to turn knowledge into action and to involve the public in the decision making.

In the words of [Samantha Burgess](#) society is hungry for strong authoritative scientific voices to provide the evidence of what how climate change is impacting us.

Nadia Pinardi mentioned the joint JPI Climate/JPI Oceans Knowledge Hub Sea Level Rise as an example for co-creation of useable climate information. It has organised several scoping activities with local authorities and coastal planner whose insights are now being digested in a first European Assessment report that is expected to be launched at the Equinox Summit II in March 2024 under the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

[Elena Lopez-Gunn](#) gave insights on her role as member of the European Science Advisory Body on Climate Change established under the European Climate Law and laid the emphasis on a need for easier access to climate knowledge given the many initiatives, projects, and programmes in parallel - dedicated to climate observation, modelling and services existing.

According to Etienne Hannon; the establishment of a national climate body that coordinates climate knowledge in Belgium is also a positive signal where legislation leads to a more structured and improved science policy interface.

A general tenor of the discussion was that **science must become more inclusive**, that solutions can come from different societal actors. Regular exchanges between science and policy are crucial to build trust and facilitate better understanding between the parties. **Science must intervene at the different stage of the policy cycle**, elaboration design and assessment cycle. Scientists can also facilitate in framing the issue and formulating the question.

Martijn Pakker explained the role and ambitions of the IEEP and of the Think2030 platform, organizing the present [Think2030 Dialogue in Spain](#), in bringing science to policy in the field of sustainability, acting as a multi-stakeholder platform between academia, policy makers and NGOs. From his experience policy briefs have to come with a story, an image of how we want to get to a solution that is convincing. He pleaded for a strong collaboration between initiatives and mentioned the role of Climate Pact Ambassadors as societal actors.

In conclusion the panelists agreed on the value of further elaborating a culture of collaboration and discussion – also with the young generation and to be politically inclusive and think collectively about making climate policy to work, push evidence-based information forward and build partnerships into the evidence generated by the scientists. In the domain of climate, knowledge is being provided by major programmes such as by Copernicus, ICOS, ESA and many projects at EU and national level. In a new paradigm for science policy engagement, researchers must engage with policymakers and other societal actors to address challenges related to real-world experiences, including those in the design and development of research. Harvesting the wealth of scientific information and ensuring that it becomes available and accessible to decision-makers needs collaboration and coordination. The proposed Equinox process introduced by JPI Climate can contribute to the acceleration of knowledge transfer by providing a decentralised European platform.

## About Think2030

Launched by IEEP and its partners in 2018, Think2030 is an evidence-based, non-partisan platform of leading policy experts from European think tanks, civil society, the private sector and local authorities.

By focusing on producing relevant, timely and concrete policy recommendations, Think2030's key objective is to identify science-policy solutions for a more sustainable Europe.

**think2030.eu**

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For more information on this paper please contact:

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