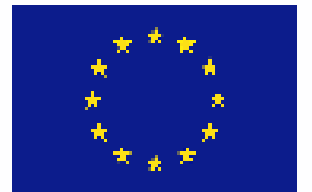# Practical Esperiences in Translating Science into Policy: results from the survey

20/10/2022

Dr Noeleen McDonald IE

Dr Aida Turrini IT
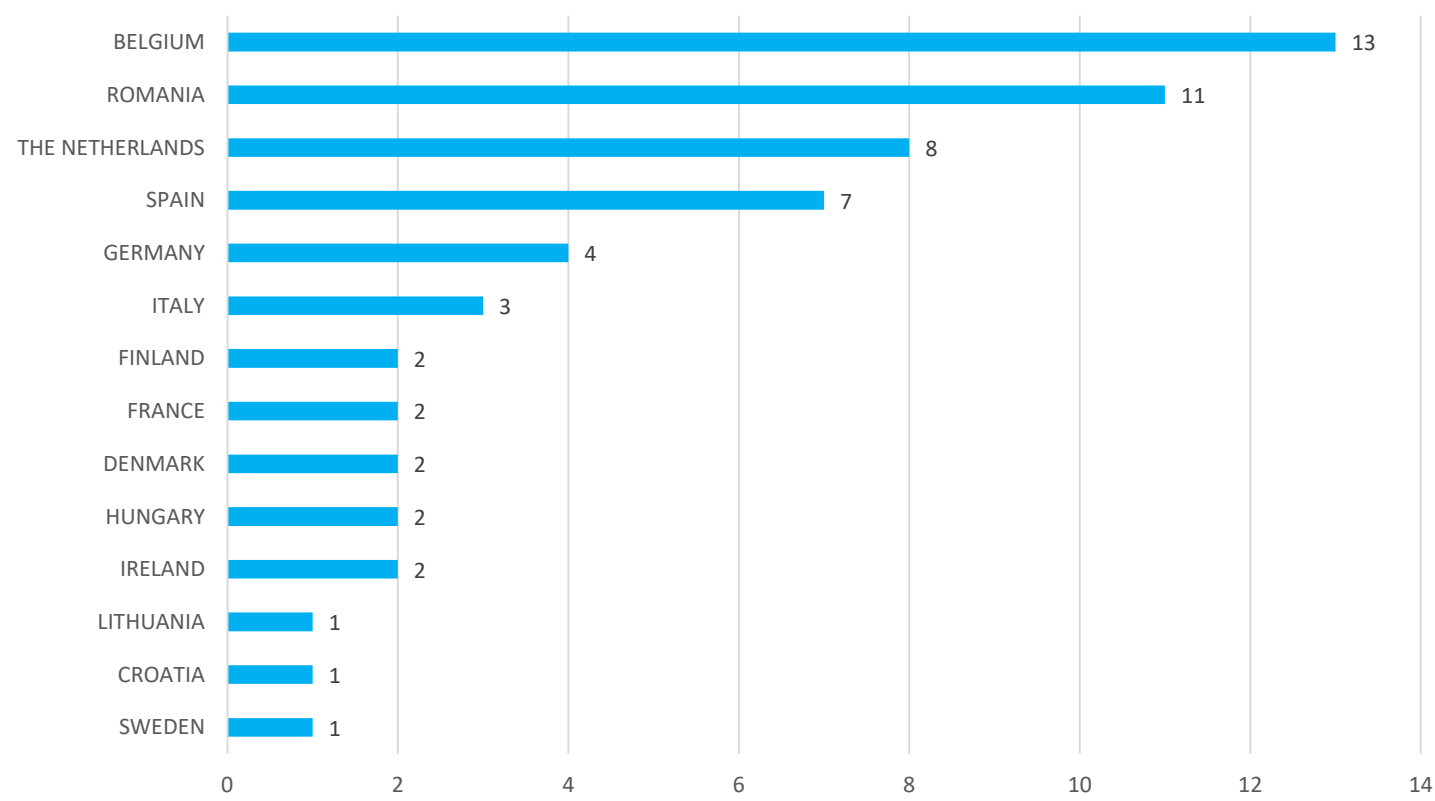
SCAR
Standing Committee
on Agricultural Research

Questionnaire- Examples of Science to Policy

- Questionnaire designed and circulated 1st July 2021 (2 rounds 2021 & 2022).
- The aim of this survey/questionnaire is to identify examples from across all member states and other participating counties of where food systems research has translated into policy.

  - **Questionnaire structure** *per example*
    I. General Questions-Who is completing the survey
    II. Background details of the R&I example that translated to policy
    III. Background details of the drivers and impacted public policy & services
    IV. The research and policy relations of the example
    V. Key learnings and what happened next
    VI. Other comments
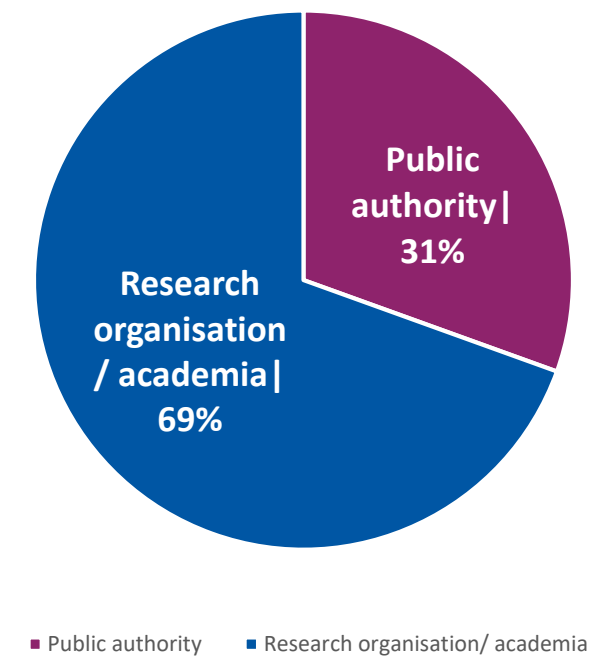
59 Completed Questionnaires, 14 countries

Number of Responses per Country

Country	Responses
BELGIUM	13
ROMANIA	11
THE NETHERLANDS	8
SPAIN	7
GERMANY	4
ITALY	3
FINLAND	2
FRANCE	2
DENMARK	2
HUNGARY	2
IRELAND	2
LITHUANIA	1
CROATIA	1
SWEDEN	1

Institution/Organization type

- Public authority | 31%
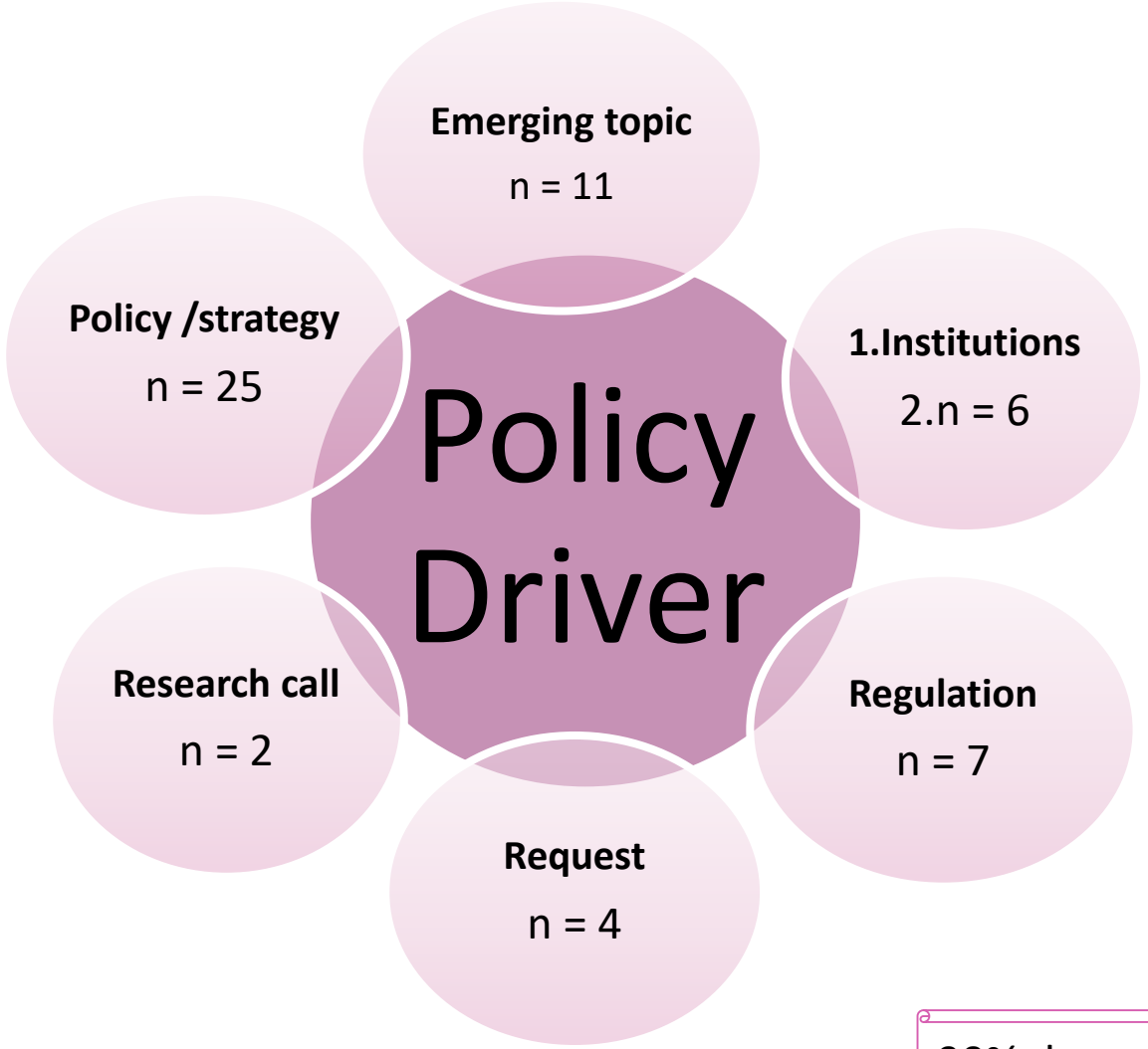- Research organisation / academia | 69%

■ Public authority ■ Research organisation/ academia

2 public authorities are research organizations and other (HU)
1 research institute is also «other» i.e., innovation broker (ES)

97% publicly funded

3

Drivers

65% national
29% international
5% regional

Emerging topic
n = 11

Policy /strategy
n = 25

1.Institutions
2.n = 6

Policy Driver

Research call
n = 2

Regulation
n = 7

Request
n = 4

n = 4 not indicated

90% demand-led

Impacted policy/service

1.Regulation

2.n = 12

Recommendation

n = 12

Policy/ strategy

n = 18

Policy impacted

Research call

n = 2

Information system

n = 8

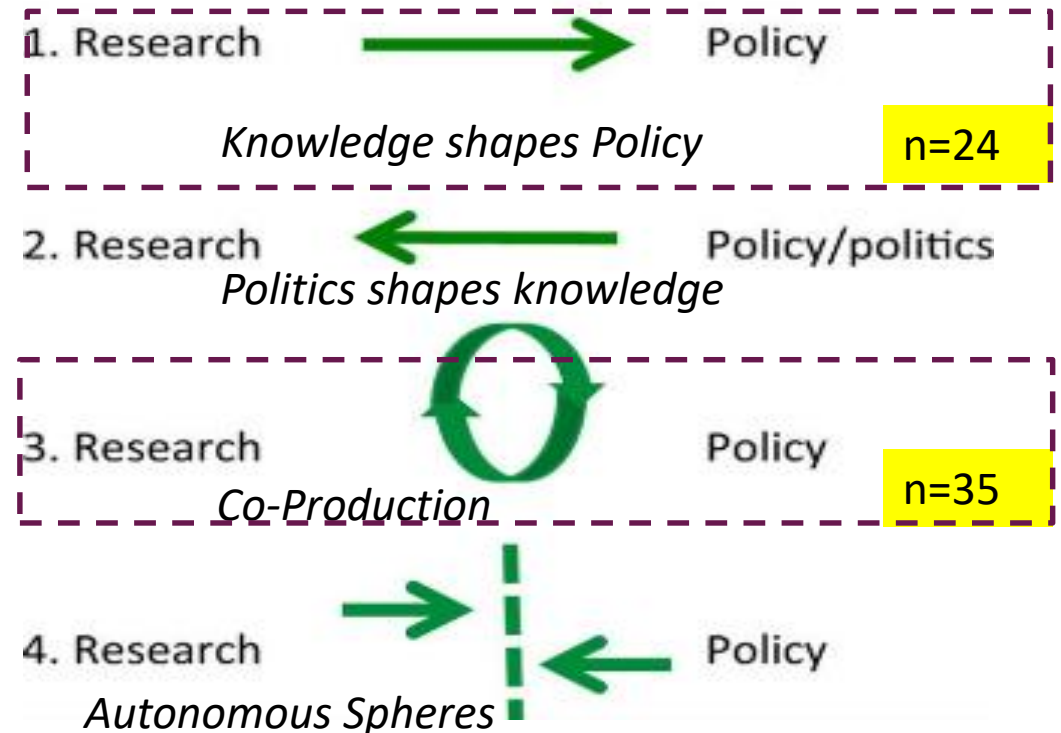**Service**

n = 3
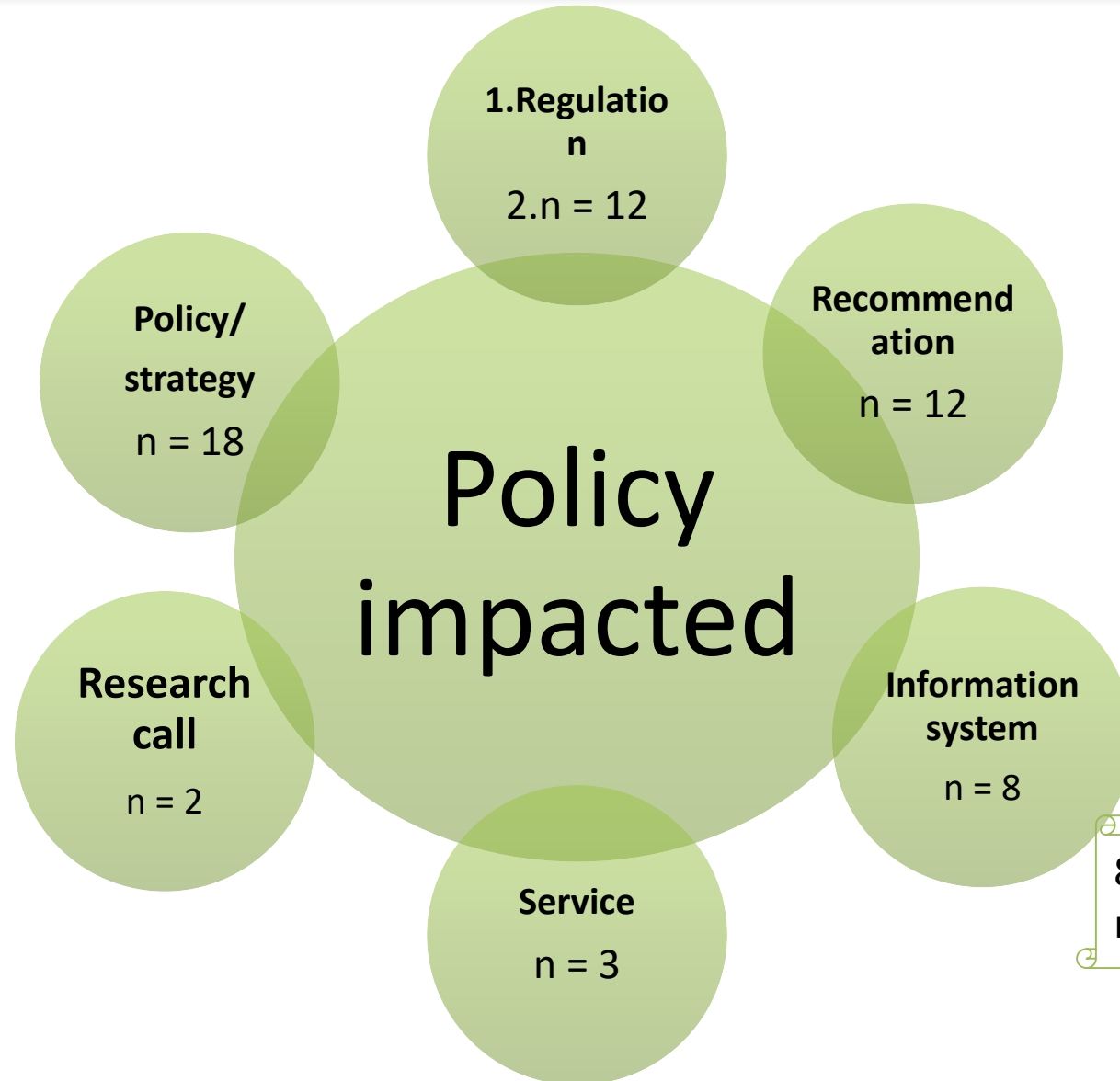
88% Informing/contributing to new policy/schemes

Research and policy relationships
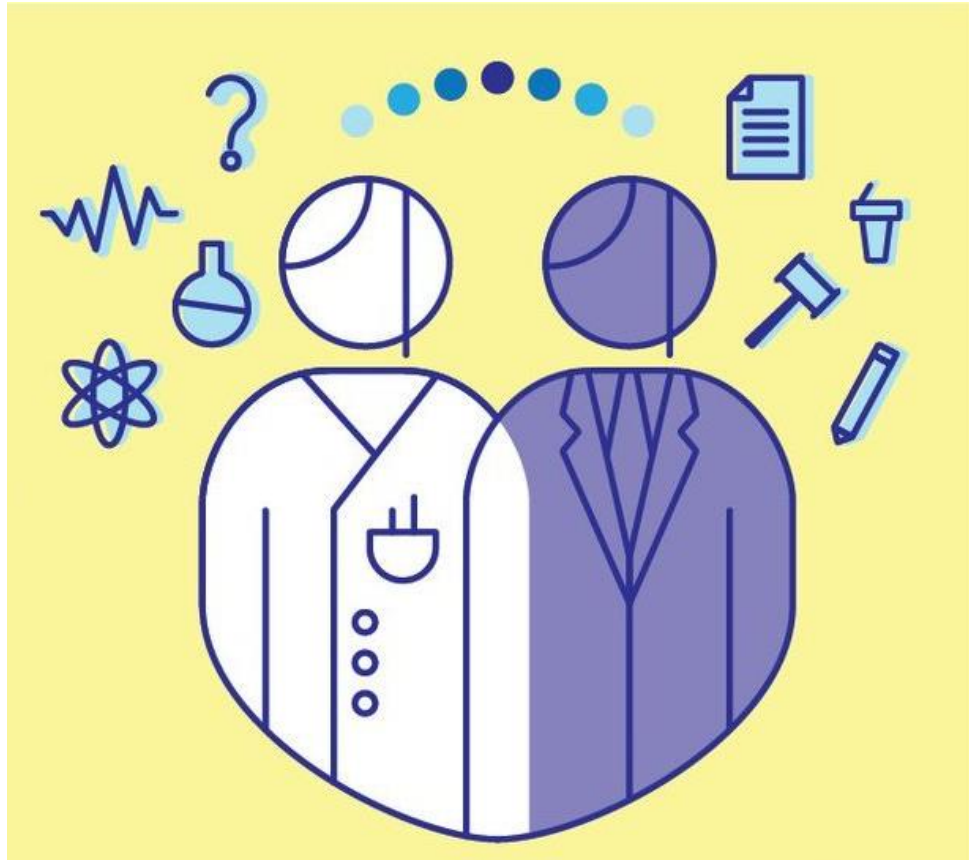
Source EU #knowledge4policy

Research-Policy Relations

1. Research → Policy
Knowledge shapes Policy n=24

2. Research ← Policy/politics
Politics shapes knowledge

3. Research ⟲ Policy
Co-Production n=35

4. Research →|← Policy
Autonomous Spheres

(Source: Boswell, C., Smith, K. 2017)

Q4.2: Were there formal structures and/or procedures in place between the research agency & /or scientist and the ministry/department/agency to aid transfer of knowledge? Yes/No

Q4.3: Was the transfer of knowledge between research and policy (even vice-versa) informal? E.g. personal consultation Yes/No

	1.Knowledge shapes policy	3.Co-production	Total
Yes	54%	91%	76%
No	46%	9%	24%
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

	1.Knowledge shapes policy	3.Co-production	Total
Yes	50%	60%	**56%**
No	50%	40%	**44%**
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Most of the cooperation activities started before the beginning of the project (71%)

Research and policy relationships

Knowledge shapes policy

Informal relationships

Co-production

| Advocacy and lobbying actions |
| Audition |
| Contacts |
| Contract |
| Meetings |
| Multi-year working relationship |
| Presentations |
| Regional governments' stakeholders took part directly of the design and development of the project |
| The leader of the project talked with the authority. A member of the Authority participated in the meetings of the project. |

| Ad-hoc meetings |
| Contacts |
| Contract |
| Distribution of a hard copy of the documents |
| Formal and informal direct contacts |
| Formal and informal information flow |
| Formal and informal meetings. |
| Informal consultations |
| Meetings, personal consultations |
| Part of a wider process |
| Participation to policy groups |
| Personal connections |
| Reporting |
| Working groups |
| Workshop |

Research and policy relationships

Knowledge shapes policy	Formal structures	Co-production
	Platform Agricultural Research	
	Ad hoc meeting	
	Annual technical conferences	
Contract	Commission was directly involved in the project	
DG SANCO Experts Group meetings to discuss	Contract	
EFSA national contact point	Demand from the ministry	
Expert assessments of health risks are conducted collectively in conjunction with Expert Committees.	Discussion forums	
	Distribution of a hard copy of the documents	
Formal demand	EFSA European Food Safety Authority; COST Programme	
Formal, interinstitutional working groups	Engagement of outcomes with the relevant Policy makers and public authorities	
Quality management system for public sector consultancy	Existing stakeholder exchange culture	
Recommendations designed to assist the competent authorities	Expert Panel of researcher and policymakers carrying out regular meeting	
	Food policy network with policy makers of different domains	
	Formal connecting activities through yearly guidance committee meetings	
Regular meetings	Formal structure between the researchers and advisory panel members in the transfer of knowledge of captured data	
Responsibility in a Steering Board	Institution with direct link	
Revision and formal approval of delivered documents	Links to the European policy (Farm2Fork)	
Subject specific working groups	Management tool to promote the aggregation between institutions and interconnection with universities and the agrifood sector	
WUR and LNV have an extensive relation but this particular policy went not through the ministry but mainly through the political line, ion contact with the agricultural spokesman of the political parties in the parliament that were negotiating a new cabinet.	National policy labs	
	Operating procedures	
	Periodical meetings	
	Periodical reporting	
	Piloting and demonstration on the field in famers	
	Project dissemination, events with policy stakeholders.	
	Reporting	
	Steering group	
	Subject specific working groups	
	The researchers and members from state labs and FSAI were also collaborators of a Formal final report	
	Training of the Agency staff	
	Website	

Q4.6: Were there fundamental evidence dissemination activities e.g. event/publication/policy brief etc., that was the basis for which the policymaker used as part of their decision making? Yes/No

Q4.8: Was there a knowledge broker involved in assisting the transfer of knowledge? Yes/No.

	1.Knowledge shapes policy	3.Co-production	Total
Yes	63%	85%	**75%**
No	38%	15%	**25%**
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

	1.Knowledge shapes policy	3.Co-production	Total
Yes	17%	29%	**24%**
No	83%	71%	**76%**
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Government	
Ministry/agency/department	2
Natural resource management group	
University and/or research institute	8
Community group	6
Industry representative	
Other	3

Contributing Factors

Knowledge shapes policy

Aggregating experiences and practices allow to raise the interest of researchers and easily reach the policy arena

Co-creation and networking between the involved stakeholders

Consumers` need for more accessible information

Evidence of knowledge gaps

Existing contacts

Findings driven policy decisions

Good results

Innovative research

Institutional contacts

Knowledge and expertise; Networking skills; Motivation for co-creation

Lack of knowledge, targeted measure and means

Money

National nutrient database

Need for developing a national directive.

Official tasks and areas of responsibility

Persistence of the research group

Personal contacts

Practice to science and finally to policy process

Relevance, pertinence, quality assurance, dialogue and scientific rigour

The creation of a policy on a specific issue is a key factor to scale up innovations developed at local level

The involvement of the Public authorities

The need of agri-food policies

The political ambitions

The project created an overview

To support the development of the regional sectors

Contributing Factors

Co-production

Alignment of several state bodies	Knowledge and expertise; Networking skills; Motivation for co-creation
Assessing impact on food chain	Large, multi-stakeholder coalition, connection of several targets
Building competences among citizens and stakeholders	Level of expertise of the involved parties
Co-creation and networking between policymakers of different domains	Long tradition in research
Creating Communities of Practice that foster RRI	Multidisciplinary multiactor team
Deep review to the scientific information about the sustainable nutrition in agricultural soils in local conditions	National circumstances and public health
Dietary database	Participating in policy discussions and Belgian biosafety council
Economy impact	Policy guiding being in the advisory panel
Effortless research and policy interaction	Practice to science and finally to policy process
Fluent information flow between parts	Proposing actions
Food chain stability	Rural policy
Food security	Services
Fostering a unique integration of existing and emerging networks and infrastructures	Specific research interest and researchers
Funding instrument	The dynamization of innovation ecosystems
Good communication and cooperation (producers - policy makers – researchers)	The involvement of researchers with a clear experience on supporting the policy development
Good results	The involvement of stakeholders
Governmental goal	The involvement of the Policy
Inclusive story across all policy domains and stakeholders	The monitoring of the innovation implemented and its adequation to demands
Industry need to review legislative limits	The need for experts to have economic support to participate in voluntary groups created at EU level in order to guarantee the representation of the Member state
Information flow	The possibility to develop a small project focusing on the data needed by the policy
Innovative spaces (policy labs, city labs, food lab)	The selection of the experts already working on the specific issue that had a clear understanding on the knowledge gap needed by the policy
intense contact/collaborations with fundamental research institutes	

Hindering Factors
Knowledge shapes policy

Challenge: Bringing together the interests and perspectives of science, industry/industry association, policy makers, and consumer advocates.

Changes in government structure

Changes in personnel

Differences of context at local level create always an obstacle to move from practice to policy through research.

Insufficient human capacity

Lack of expertise

Lack of resources

Lack of resources represent always a limitation that make sometime fragmented the process from practice to policy
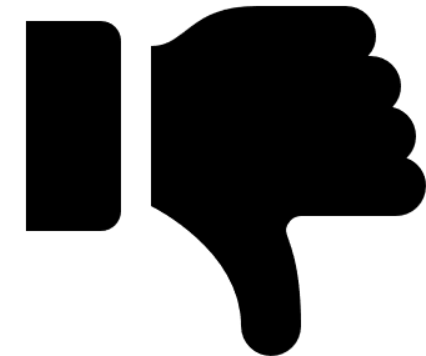
Lack of time

No fixed resources

Plan from year to year

The bureaucratic reluctance against new initiatives. Changes in government structure

The cultural beliefs

The lack of trust in authorities in some EU countries

The medical system is not focused on prevention

41% of the cases reported hindering factors; Knowledge shapes the policy

Hindering Factors

Co-production

Challenge: Bringing together the interests and perspectives of science, industry/industry association, policy makers, and consumer advocates.

Change in the management

Change in the priorities

Changes in the interlocutors

Different EU countries dedicate a different amount of resources to different issues and are differently represented.

Difficulty to get to a compromise among economic and environmental sustainability

Difficulty to get to practices easily evaluable by the Ministry

Difficulty to satisfy all stakeholders demands

Food Safety legislation

Food safety regulation is strict and hinders a lot of reuse of food wastage as fodder

It was necessary to have experts with significant knowledge

Lack of confidence

Lack of formal procedures

Lack of information with the current scientific quality criteria

Lack of interest

Lack of resources

Lack of resources represent always a limitation that make sometime fragmented the process from practice to policy

Lack of suitable finance and business models

Lack of time

Location of the different experts making difficult to have a deep knowledge on local system

The administrative bureaucracy to startup the project

The Expert Panel members were not paid for this work, so sometimes the work advanced more slowly than it should, because the experts had more urgent issues.

Timeline too tight

Uptake of research in policy is not always 1-1 visible, takes time.
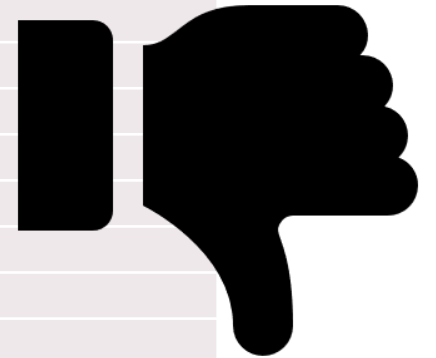
Other comments

This is an example of how research can show policy efficacy and fine-tune policy. Currently there is a plan to ==continue this funding instrument for 2021-2023 with wider application== as proposed in the study. (FI 01.02)

The acknowledge of the team led to ==several European collaborations==. (FR 07.01)

- ...==Policy is at the beginning and at the end of the process==. Local Administrations are the one involved in developing the practices, the ==Innovation Broker== ... put together existing experiences into a network and promoted the concept rather than the individual experience. This raised the interest of research and a specific methodology was developed in research projects... Finally the policy process started from the regional level, with regional laws recognizing ... and finally in 2017 a National Law (205/2017) allowed to have specific economic resources dedicated ... This process is a good example of ==scaling up an innovation from practice to policy through research== (IT 03.01)

- The example ... shows ==how with a small amount of money, if the right experts are identified, it is possible to develop targeted research in order to support a policy process==. Another key aspects is to consider the possibility to include, as dissemination activity of research projects, the support to participate in expert groups created at EU level. (IT 03.02)

- This example is including several projects, as they all are related to European regulation on Innovation and Organic Farming as an example, more than on national policies. However, Italian ==innovation brokers often played a key role== on such projects and in the following years supported also the Italian Government in participating in EU debate and be ready when such regulation need to be adopted at national level. (IT 03.03)

Summary

Main observations:

- The set of cases provide interesting examples of translating science into policy.

- These examples were policy-driven, demand lead, public funded and research mostly informing/contributing to new policy/schemes.

- Factors characterising the cases range from specific to general ones. From the survey findings to date we can hypothesize that the contexts play the major role.

- Majority of examples show relationships of researchers with policymakers that enabled translation of research.

- The type of relationship was mostly a co-production process.

- Several contributing and hindering factors are elicited. The co-production relationship implies more contributing factors, but also hindering ones.

- Several structures are possible both in an informal and a formal context. In most cases bot informal and formal structures co-exist, thus maximising the possibility to go through the process from research practice to policy.

THANK YOU
For your attention

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