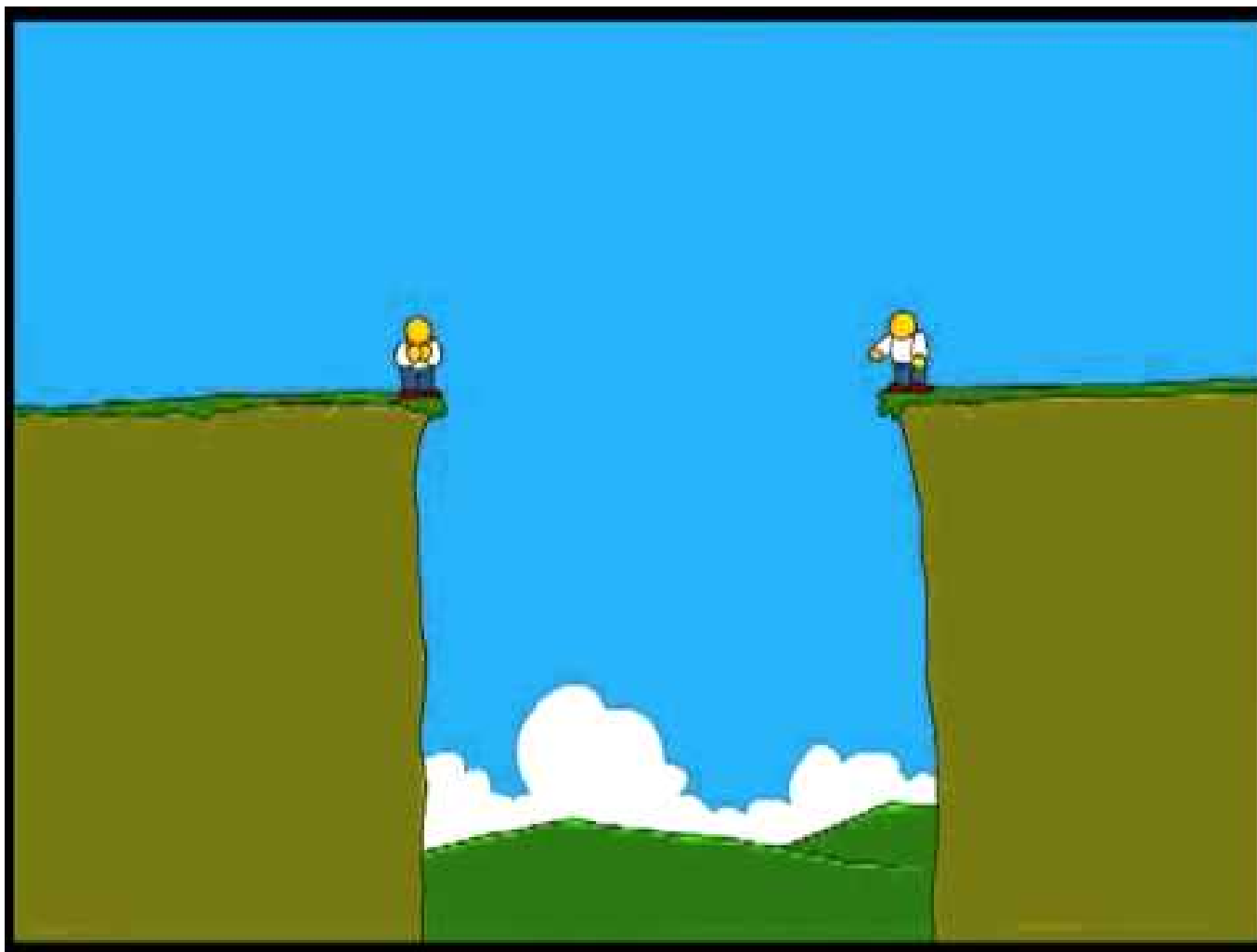


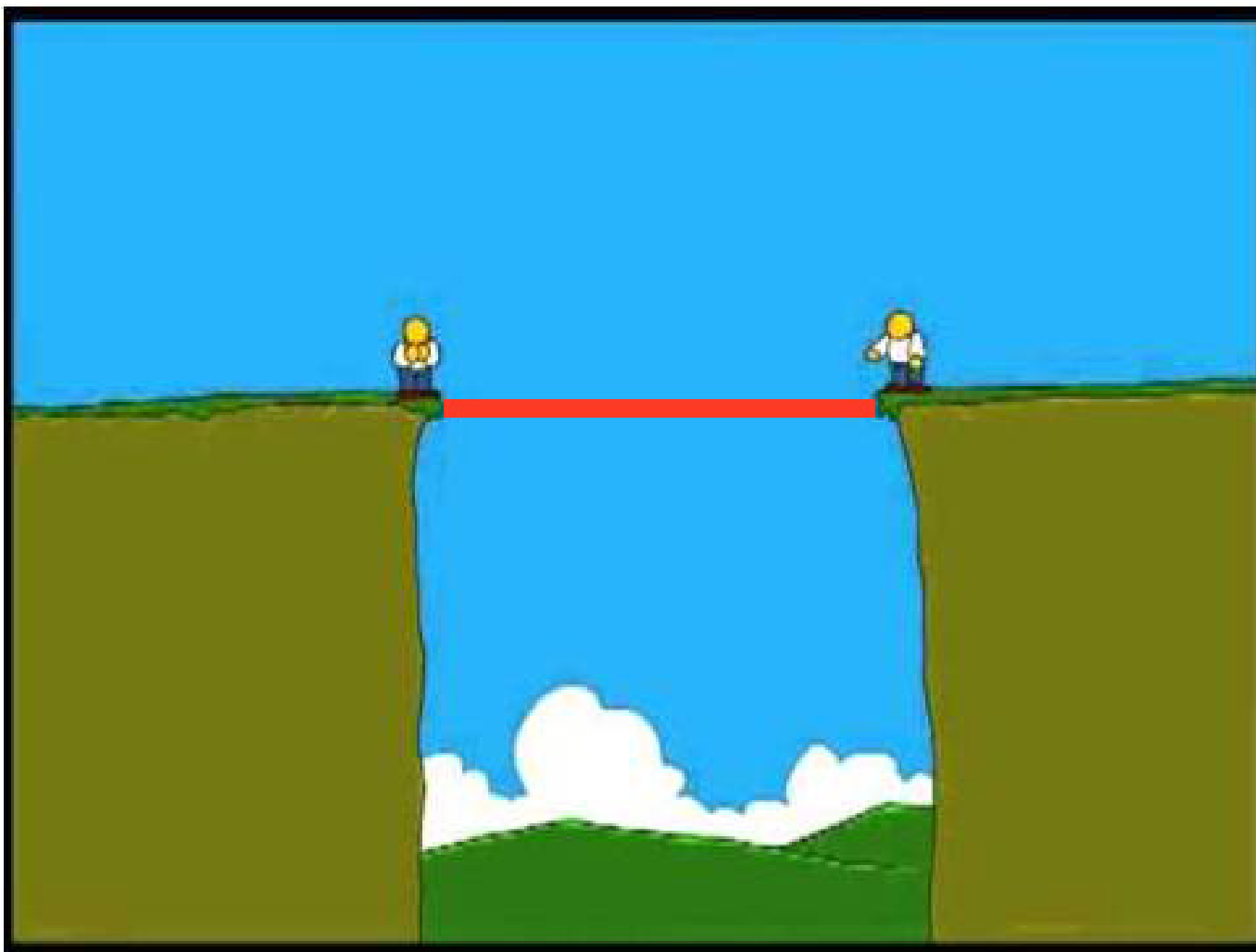


Science for Environment Policy and the SCOOP project

Connecting researchers and policymakers across the EU

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University of the West of England, Bristol








Science for Environment Policy

DG Environment News Alert Service

European Commission 

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Issue 262

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IN THIS ISSUE

Taxes on natural resources reduce use of raw materials

A recent study has investigated how taxes on virgin raw materials used in construction, such as gravel and sand, have reduced the use of these resources, based on experiences in Denmark, Sweden and the UK. However, greater incentives to recycle these materials are still needed, says the study. ([more...](#)) [Download article \(PDF\)](#)

At what cost recovery? Estimating the cost of natural disasters

When natural disasters, such as earthquakes, storms and hurricanes, are reported in the media, they are often accompanied by an assessment of the cost of the disaster. While such information can be useful to help governments and international organisations target aid and recovery efforts, the details of what is included in the assessment, and the methods used, are often unclear. ([more...](#)) [Download article \(PDF\)](#)

Greater recognition of ecosystem services needed for food security

Global food security under a changing climate is possible if the vital role of healthy ecosystems is recognised, according to a recent study. The researchers suggest that an ecosystem-based approach must be integrated with other measures to tackle food security under climate change, to protect ecosystems and supply the essential services on which humanity depends. ([more...](#)) [Download article \(PDF\)](#)

Particle fragments: an overlooked hazard of oil and gas exploration

Fragments of crushed rock released into the ocean during oil and gas exploration can physically bury organisms that live on the seafloor, accounting for 55% of offshore drilling's environmental impact, according to a recent study. To allow more informed marine policy decisions, this physical impact must be recognised alongside the impact of chemicals released in drilling waste. ([more...](#)) [Download article \(PDF\)](#)

Water for microalgae cultivation has significant energy requirements

A substantial amount of energy is needed to manage all the water used in the mass cultivation of microalgae for biodiesel. A recent study suggests that seven times more energy is required to manage the water, than is delivered by the biodiesel when it is used as fuel. ([more...](#)) [Download article \(PDF\)](#)



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Diversity reigns across Europe in approaching socio-economic development

European countries show considerable diversity in dealing with socio-economic challenges, according to preliminary results from the **ICatSEM** research project. EU Member States have developed different strategies for fostering socio-economic advancement and addressing the challenges of globalisation. Noting that institutional forms mediate the synergies and trade-offs of actors with divergent interests and that this is also true in a globalised world, the project suggests that EU Member States are likely to experience a renewal of institutional diversity moving forward. ([more...](#))

Opportunities and barriers to active participation of older people in society

Europe's society and workforce is ageing due to a combination of low birth rates and rising life expectancy. It is estimated that there will be only two people of working age (15-64) for every person aged over 65 in the European Union by the year 2060, compared to a ratio of four to one today. A peak in the number of retired people is expected to occur during the period 2015-35 when the 'baby boom' generation retires, leading to fears that retirees may become too heavy a burden on younger, working-age people, and increase pressure on public budgets and pension systems. ([more...](#))

Revitalising the role of the city through cultural integration

Among the factors within a population's surroundings that can help or hinder cultural integration, the **GEITONIES** research project concludes that although the local neighbourhood is an important starting point to establish informal interethnic contact, more responsibility for promoting integration should be adopted at the city, national and EU level to develop meaningful, long-term relations. ([more...](#))

Learning to improve governance for all and by all

Capacity building of collective actors is essential to prevent market failures or failures related to direct governmental regulations imposed in the name of public interest, as identified by the **REFGOV** (*Reflexive Governance*) research project. To improve the situation, the project proposes to involve actors and users, or stakeholders in a common process of self-evaluation of their identity and objectives in which lessons from local experiments are pooled and cross-regional/cross-country learning is fostered. ([more...](#))

Towards more reliable measurements of poverty and social exclusion in Europe

Only the most accurate and reliable methods to measure poverty and social exclusion in



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Socio-economic and Humanities Research for Policy News Alert Service strengthens the links between research funded under the European Union's 6th and 7th Framework Programmes for research and policy by placing the latest research findings in a policy context. Each issue of the news alert contains 6 reports.

Research activities presented are:

- Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society
- Combining economic, social and environmental objectives in a European perspective
- Major trends in society and their implications
- The role of Europe in the world
- The citizen in the European Union
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Science for Environment Policy is a free news and information service published by [Directorate-General Environment](#), European Commission. It is designed to help the busy policymaker keep up-to-date with the latest environmental research findings needed to design, implement and regulate effective policies.

A range of helpful information sources are provided by the service:

- **Science for Environment Policy News Alert**
A weekly email which presents accessible summaries of key studies across a range of environmental topics.
- **Thematic Issues**
Each issue focuses on a hot policy topic, with accessible summaries of studies and a guest editorial.
- **Future Briefs**
New policy briefs which explore the evidence around emerging environmental issues.
- **Research Repository**
New online database of policy relevant environmental research results. (Coming soon)

Science for Environment Policy covers research in the following areas:

- | | |
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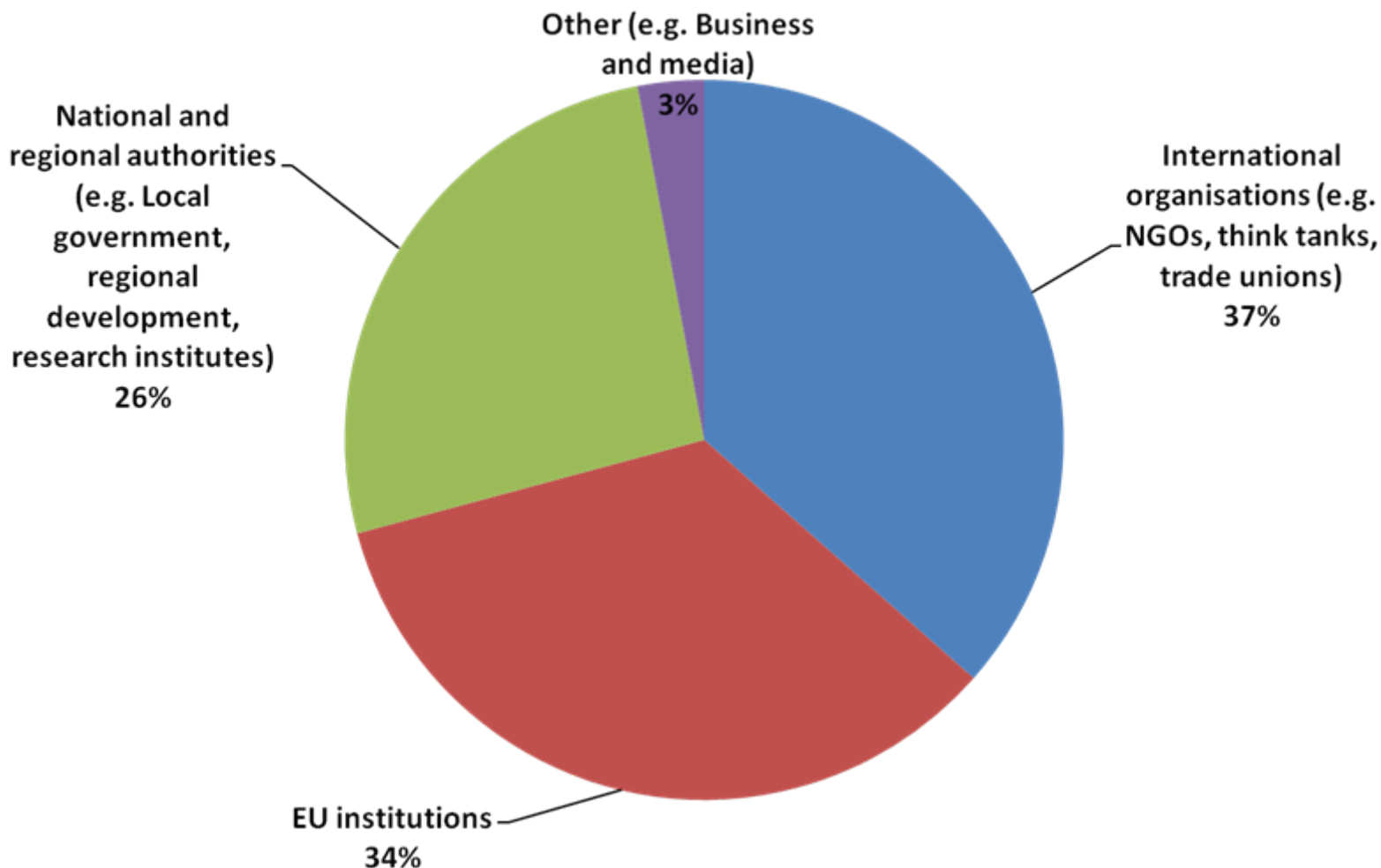


2010 subscriber survey - SfEP

- Kept up-to-date with the latest environment policy relevant scientific research (93%).
- Makes it easier to understand what is going on in environmental research (83%).
- Provides information difficult to find elsewhere (67%).

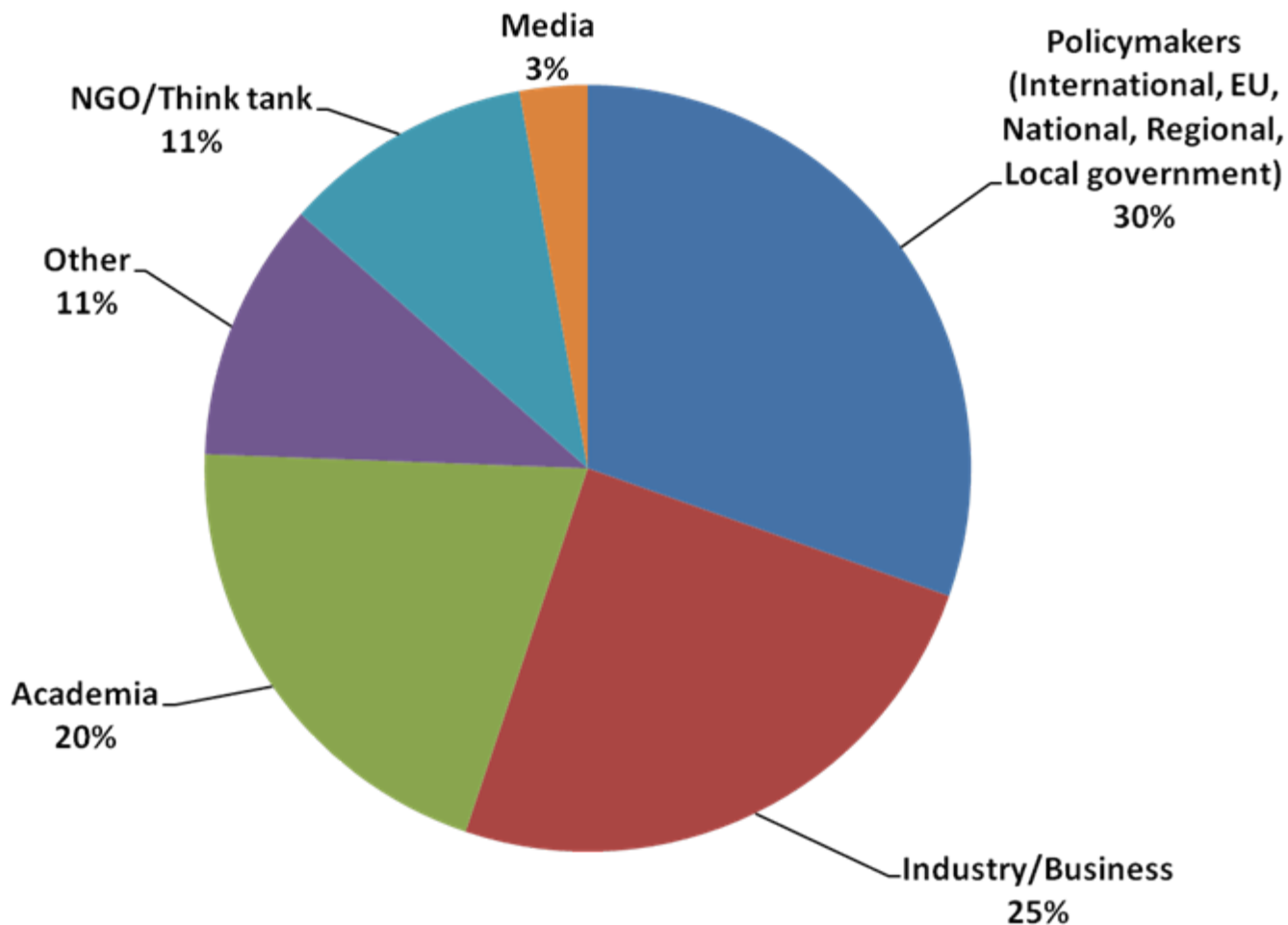


Subscriber profile by organisation - SCOOP





Subscriber profile by organisation - SfEP





Feedback from researchers - SfEP

“Our article was very much meant to speak to a larger audience about agriculture and trade so I got requests from a number of scholars as well as the UN and SAO and a couple like international agricultural organisations.” (Researcher 5 interview, Research Associate, Energy and Food Security, USA)

“Usually no one reads your papers except five, six scientists that are interested in your area will read it. So actually I think it’s a really useful thing. Much more useful if you want to really influence instead of just writing papers that are never covered everywhere.” (Researcher 2 interview, Senior Lecturer, Biodiversity, Israel)



Feedback from readers - SCOOP

“I work for the EU - Council of Europe youth partnership, which is a joint programme of the two institutions aimed at achieving evidence-based youth policy in Europe... I have recently discovered SCOOP and am impressed by your work. I find your News Alert service very useful and have shared it with our members.”

“I permit myself to write you in order to express my support and admiration for "scoop project". I am working for PDER, an organization for the promotion of Roma people participation in public affairs. I find your activities very interesting...”



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Masterclasses on Communicating Research

Many researchers have difficulty finding appropriate ways to communicate the outcomes of their research to policy makers. Modern EU policies need to be based on scientific evidence so it is critical that these difficulties are adequately addressed.

For that purpose, the SCOOP project (funded under the 7th Framework Programme) has designed and implemented a series of Masterclasses aimed at maximising the dissemination and transfer of knowledge from Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) research to policy makers.



July 2010 delegates comparing example Policy Briefs

Projects funded within the SSH programme are now invited to nominate a representative to attend a practical and interactive Communication Masterclass focused on improving the dissemination of research results to policy makers at



Feedback from delegates

53 delegates have attended from 15 countries.

“Very informative. Very useful. This Masterclass should be available to many more projects - should be compulsory for all new projects.”

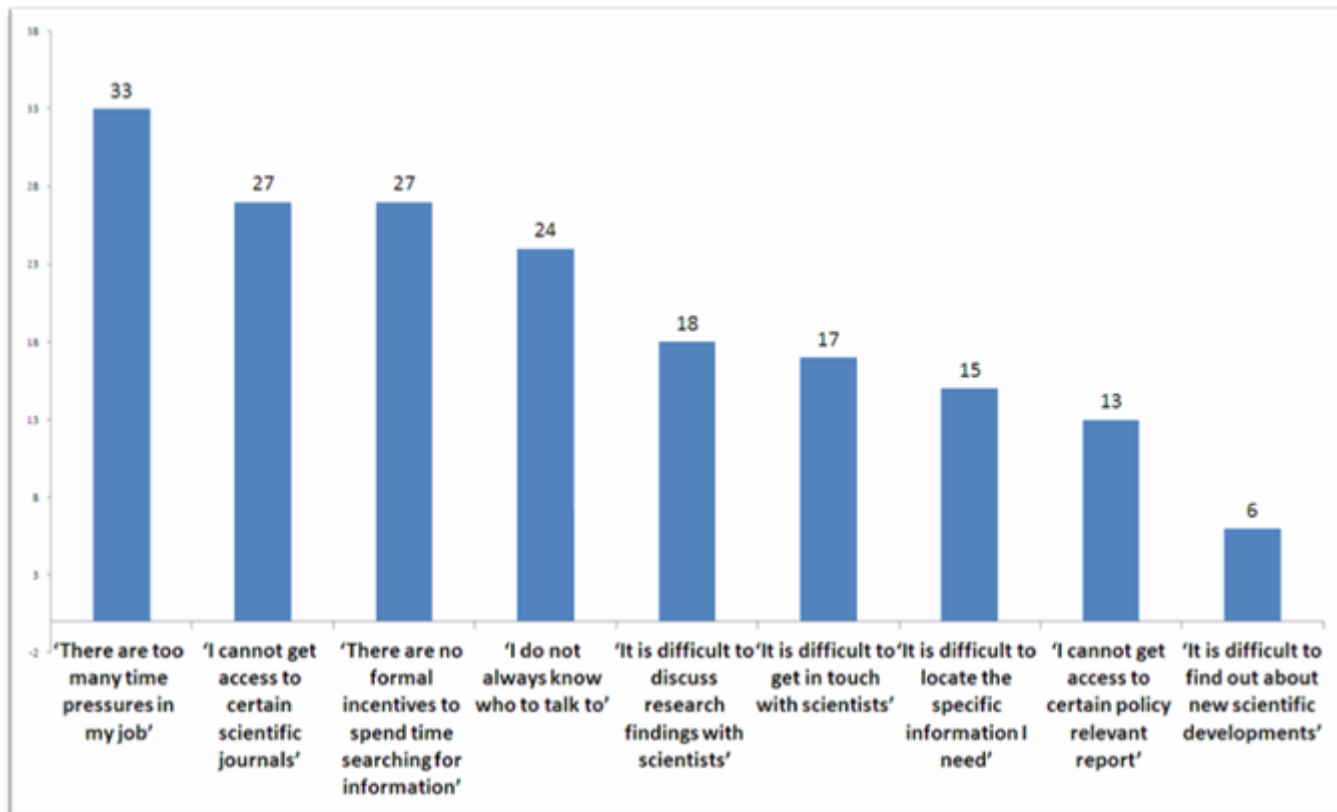
“A very helpful overview of dissemination tools and instruments to diffuse results to policy makers.”

“I really hope there will be more initiatives in this direction! Well done! Thanks a lot!”



News service recommendations

1. Accessibility



Barriers to accessing science for policy

UK local government survey (2010)



News service recommendations

1. Accessibility

- **Non-technical**
- **Shareable**

“One of the issues which arises when you work with local authorities is that most of the members - the elected members - are not scientists... [I’ll be] trying to look at an understandable summary for say an elected member of a council ... if I can back up what I am saying via one side of A4 article ...that is very useful, and that’s where scientific publications tend to get involved in policy.”

“Ultimately it’s about credible evidence...[that can be] put in front of political members here. It means the message that we’re trying to convey is more likely to be accepted because it’s coming from a verifiable, independent third party source.”



News service recommendations

1. Accessibility

- **Short**

“One of the beauties of [the SfEP News Alert] is that it's short. I think if it gets too long you just don't look at it.”

“In one day of work we have 2 or 3 minutes to look at [the SfEP News Alert]. We have ten news alerts a day and hundreds of other emails so we don't have a lot of time.”

Interviews with European Commission policymakers (2010)

Be: concise, precise, simple, use graphics and contextualise the research.

Conclusion of interviews with European policymakers (2011)



News service recommendations

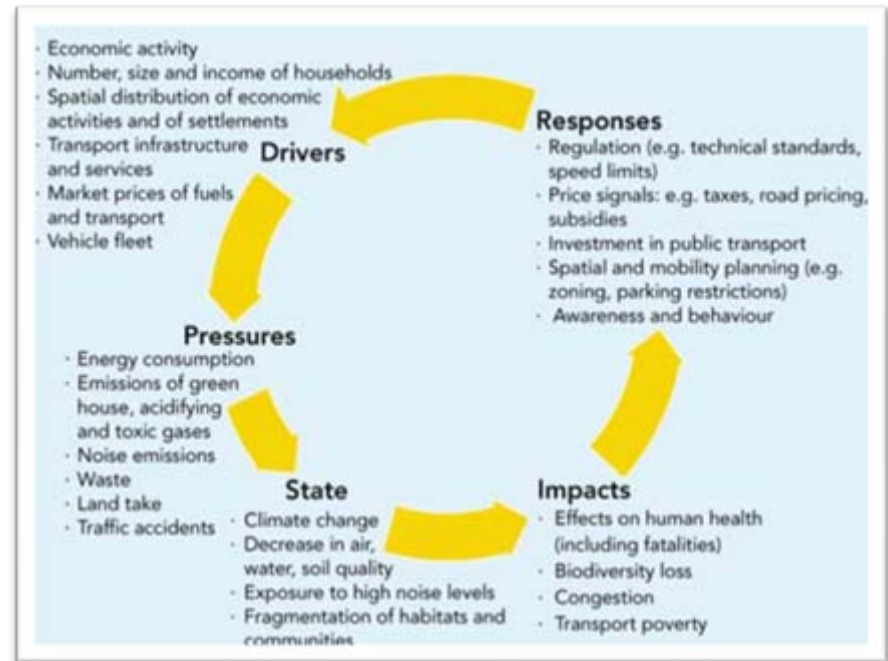
2. Policy-relevant information

Policy cycle:

Issue identification-Design-Implementation-Evaluation

Policy framework:

Drivers - Pressures - State - Impact - Response ('DPSIR')





News service recommendations

2. Policy-relevant information

Quantifiable information:

“One of the key barriers we’ve got is having some kind of comparison ... comparing the significance of one impact with another. In any kind of quantifiable and objective way, so for example if we say that the effect of say reduced air quality as a result of a particular development, whether that is more important than say an impact on the ecological resource of that particular area as a result of that said development.”

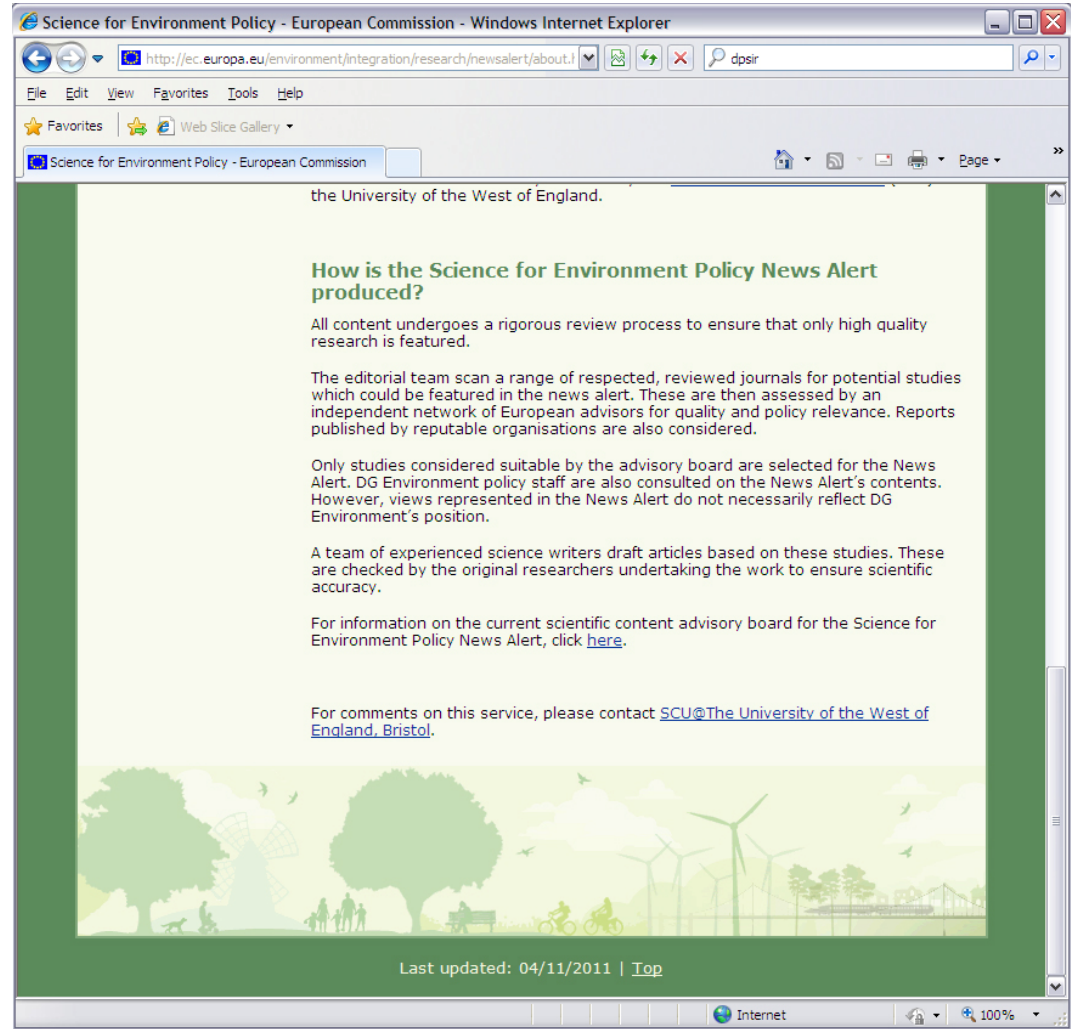
“We need to protect air quality but someone else thinks that an archaeological resource is more important. How do we get to some kind of reasonable consensus as to which is the most important asset? A trade off really if you like.”

UK local government interviews (2010)



News service recommendations

3. Credibility



the University of the West of England.

How is the Science for Environment Policy News Alert produced?

All content undergoes a rigorous review process to ensure that only high quality research is featured.

The editorial team scan a range of respected, reviewed journals for potential studies which could be featured in the news alert. These are then assessed by an independent network of European advisors for quality and policy relevance. Reports published by reputable organisations are also considered.

Only studies considered suitable by the advisory board are selected for the News Alert. DG Environment policy staff are also consulted on the News Alert's contents. However, views represented in the News Alert do not necessarily reflect DG Environment's position.

A team of experienced science writers draft articles based on these studies. These are checked by the original researchers undertaking the work to ensure scientific accuracy.

For information on the current scientific content advisory board for the Science for Environment Policy News Alert, click [here](#).

For comments on this service, please contact SCU@The University of the West of England, Bristol.

Last updated: 04/11/2011 | [Top](#)



Question – how much interpretation?

For interpretation:

“We should include distilled advice for policymakers as well as a readable overview.”

European Commission Science-Policy workshop participant (2009)

“...what would also be useful is how do you use and apply that evidence? I think information, advice and highlighting new research on good ways to do that is really critical because it's all very well having the science but if you don't know how to apply it ... then the science in some ways gets lost. The value of that research gets lost.”

UK local government interviews (2010)



Question – how much interpretation?

Against interpretation:

“I actually can't see what the point of any additional [policy] information would be, because you know the subject, you know the policy, you know the main issues. I really can't see that it would help.”

“When it is my field I hardly feel the need for more knowledge or more context.”

Interviews with European Commission policymakers (2010)



News services – bridging the gap?

Does ease of information bridge the gap?

