Looking for deep interfaces between science and policy

The HERMES & HERMIONE projects

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Hotspot Ecosystems Research on the Margins of European Seas (HERMES)
Hotspot Ecosystems Research and Man’s Impact on European Seas (HERMIONE)

Deep-sea Ecosystems
- Dimensions
- Distribution
- Interconnection
- Biological capacities
- Specific adaptations
- Functioning
- Importance of biodiversity
- Goods and services
- Values
- Governance
- Changes
- Drivers of change (climate change, human impacts, large-scale episodic events)
- Policy support
- Dissemination

A scientific drive to discover and understand the ecosystems and the human impacts, combined to a recognition of the need for policy-relevant knowledge
The deep sea

- Remote, harsh environment, very much unknown
- Far from everyday experience of citizens and decision-makers
- Awareness limited
- Still a young area of discovery and research, depends on technologies to access (e.g. Remotely Operated Vehicles – ROVs)
- Knowledge is still limited: in-depth biological knowledge for only the equivalent of a few football fields...
- Evidence of severe anthropogenic impacts on the deep sea
A governance maze

- Criss-cross of legal and natural, vertical and horizontal, boundaries applying to the deep-sea and deep-seabed areas
- Yet still many governance and implementation gaps
- Complicates policy design and implementation, difficulty to link with shallow-water governance regimes

Source: Adapted from IUCN, 2007
From the onset...

Quality environmental science

Scientific excellence

Linking with Society: Interfaces between
- Science & Policy
- Science & Society

Relevance to societal issues

Interdisciplinary

Issue-driven & curiosity-driven

Explanations & Predictions

Focus on societal issues and the role of science in addressing them.
Our key science-policy interfaces

**SCIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PANEL**
- 7 members (EC, NGOs, industry, IUCN, UNEP)
- Participate to annual meetings ⇒ in-depth discussions with scientists;
- Inform scientists community of key political issues and milestones;
- Make suggestions to adjust work programme

**SCIENCE POLICY PANEL**
- ca. 25 members (EU policy-makers, industry, NGOs, intal. institutions)
- Workshops to discuss policy contexts and research results
- Inputs on policy needs and priorities
- Regularly informed of the aims and results of HERMES
Our key science-policy interfaces

- Science Implementation Panel (SIP)
- Science-Policy Panel (SPP)
- Ad hoc meetings with policy-makers and stakeholders on specific topics
- Participation of scientists in various international fora (e.g. OSPAR, ISA, ICES, CBD, UNGA, etc) and policy-oriented workshops and conferences
- UNEP as a partner in the project
- Specific policy-oriented dissemination actions and products
And other products and actions

• Deep-sea Briefs
• Input into the EU Maritime policy and the marine and maritime research strategy (EurOceans, stakeholder consultations)
• Foresights & research strategy
• Current work with EEA to develop Eye on Earth based products
Challenges for SPIs of research projects

- Scientists recognising importance of SPI tasks
- Resources (time and money)
- Institutional support for scientists
- Availability of policy-makers, right access
- Keeping track of policy priorities
- Being able to call attention to emerging issues
- Collaborating with other SPIs
- Timeliness and the appropriate format
- Communicating about uncertainties and knowledge gaps
- Establishing and maintaining a dialogue
- Training of scientists and policy-makers

SPI = Science-Policy Interface
Thank you!