

# Linking Research with Policy Makers



**Laura Burke**  
*Director General, Irish EPA*



# Acknowledgements

## EPA Research Project - BRIDGE



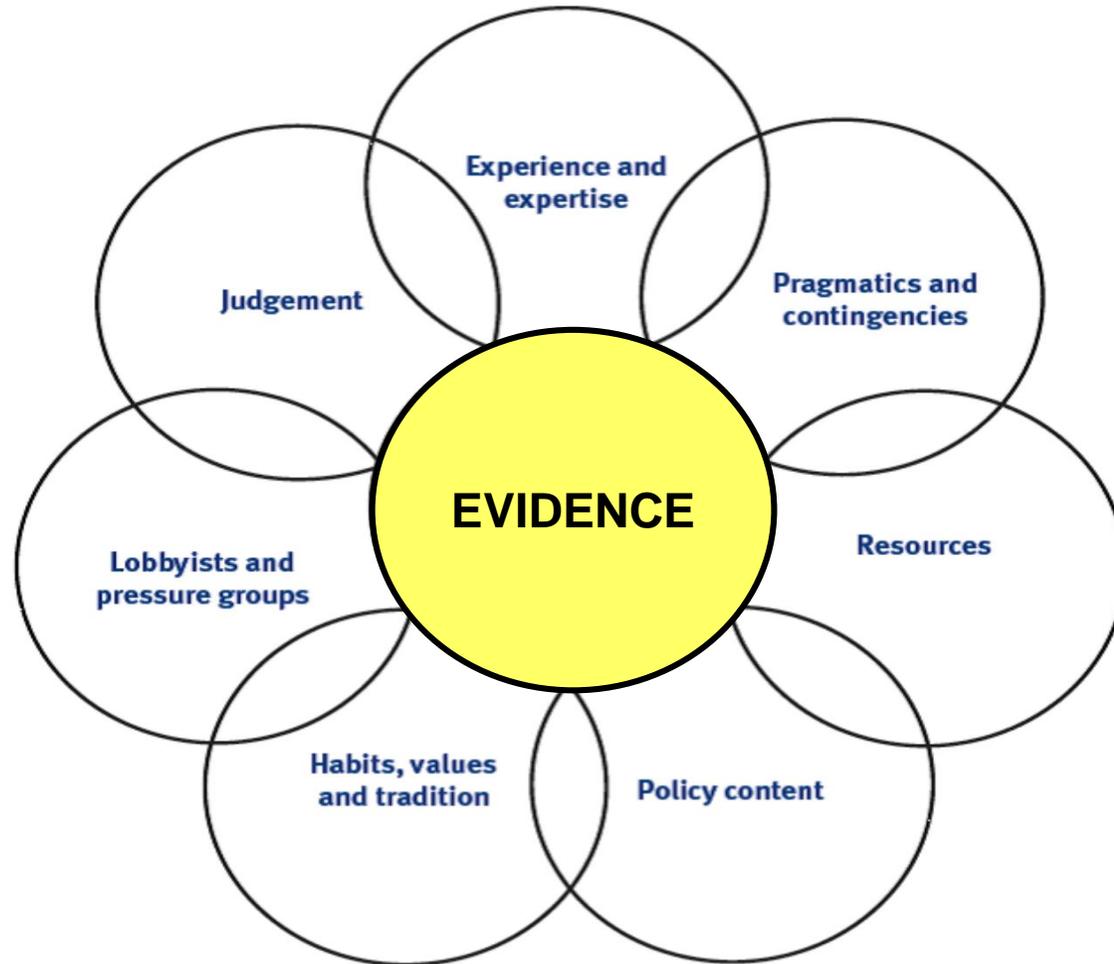
*Scientists have knowledge, but typically limited authority to bring about change, while policy-makers have the authority, but may not be aware of the most up-to-date knowledge to inform effective change*



The core societal need is for Evidence based policy



# It is a complicated battlefield for the scientist!

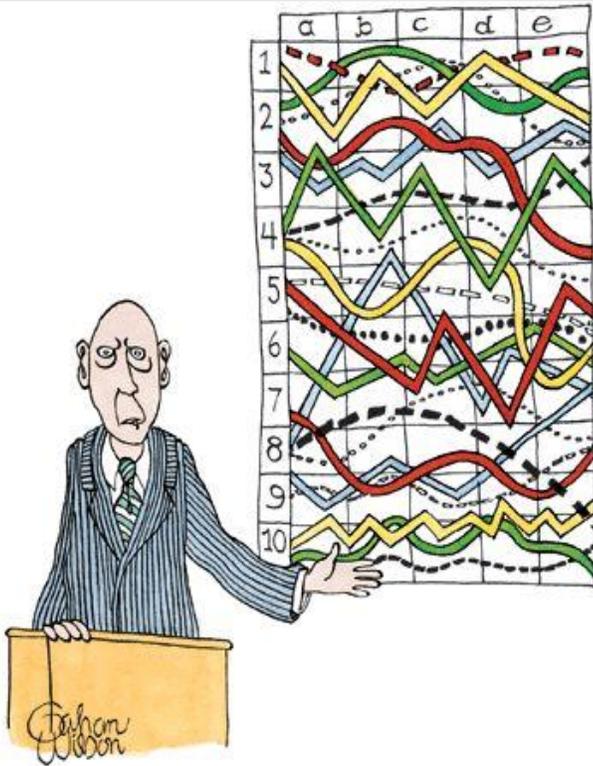


Policy is influenced by many factors (adapted from Jones and Walsh, 2008: 2)



6<sup>TH</sup> EEENF, 2017

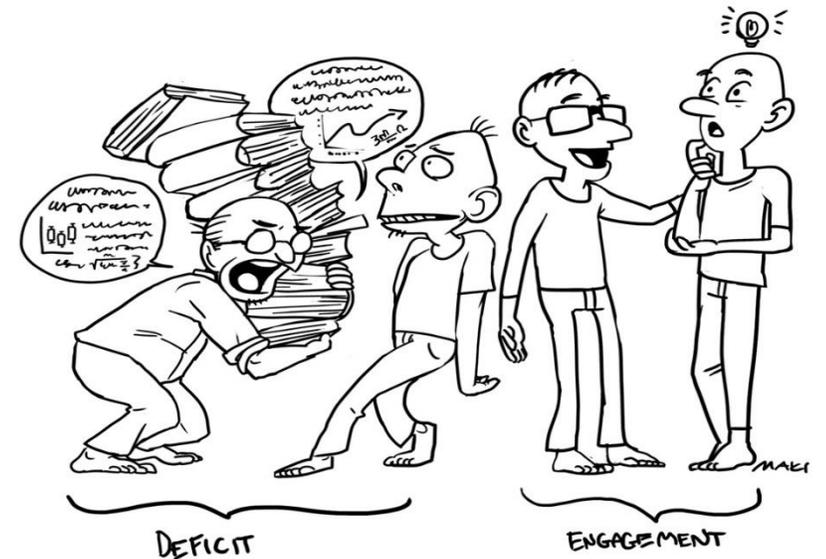
# Some influencing challenges ...



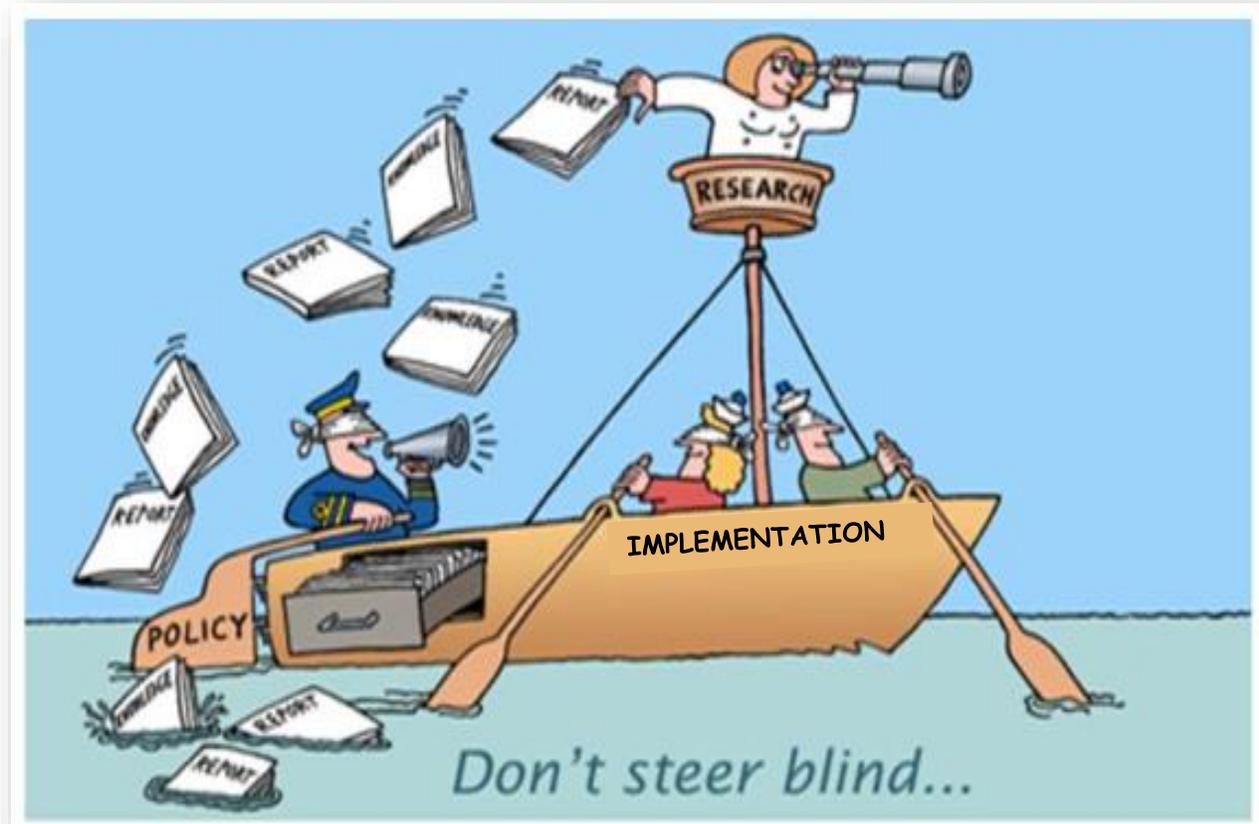
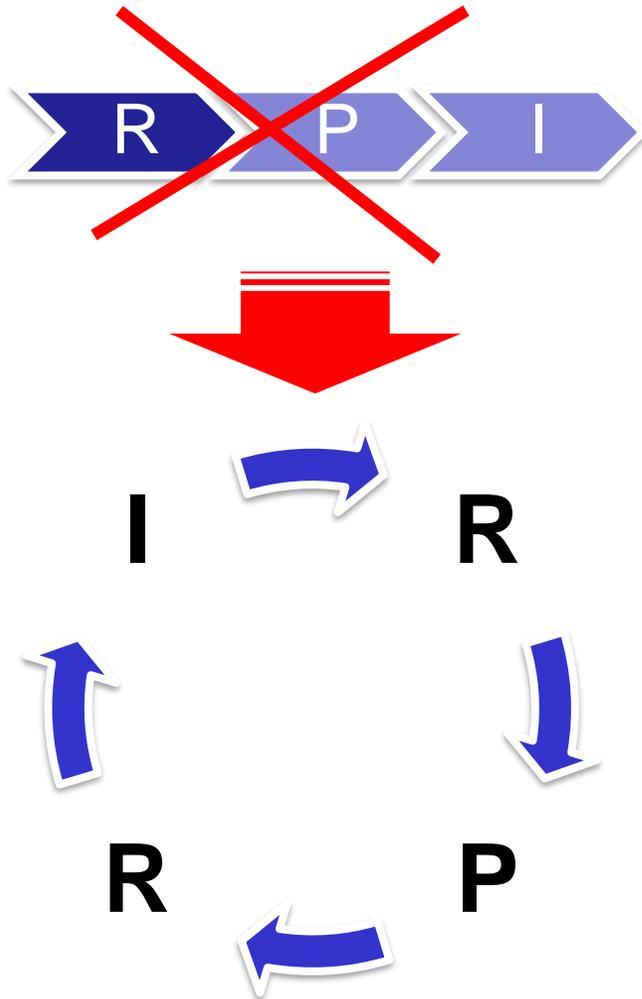
"I'll pause for a moment so you can let this information sink in."



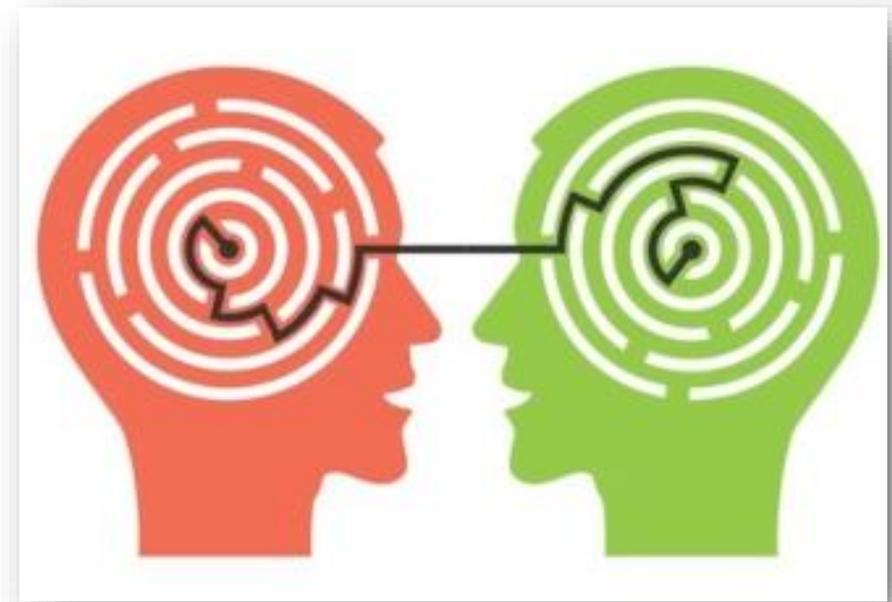
Just because I don't care doesn't mean I don't understand.  
- Homer Simpson

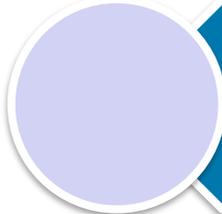


# A new paradigm

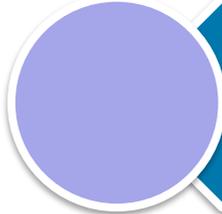


- Timeframes – Policy Cycle V Research Agenda
- Culture & work practices
- Language
- Policy makers time-poor, access limited
- Funding not policy orientated
- Complexity & Uncertainty
- Poorly developed communication skills
- Different ways of understanding knowledge
- Different decision-making criteria
- Different scientific interpretations
- Recognition/career (peer reviewed publications Vs policy output)

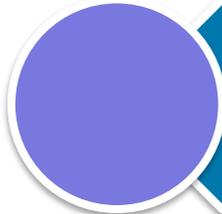




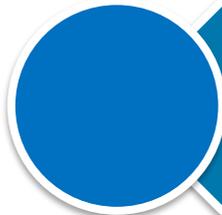
Research institutional buy-in and support



Collaborative spaces for communication



Knowledge brokering and intermediaries



Appropriate communication channels,  
content and vocabulary



IT'S ALL VERY WELL "MAKING DISCOVERIES",  
"SAVING LIVES" AND "IMPROVING THE WORLD",  
ROGER. BUT YOUR RESEARCH IS MAKING  
BARELY ANY IMPACT ON SOCIAL MEDIA.



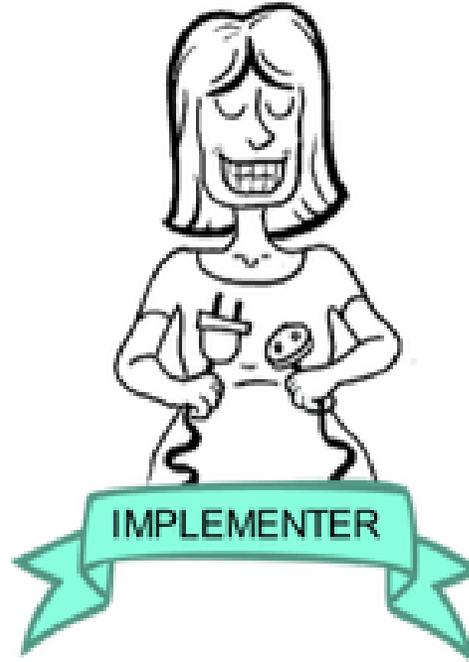
# The Science to Policy Actors



**THE  
RESEARCHER**



**THE  
POLICY MAKER**



**THE  
IMPLEMENTER**



**THE  
INTERMEDIARY  
(aka 'the broker')**



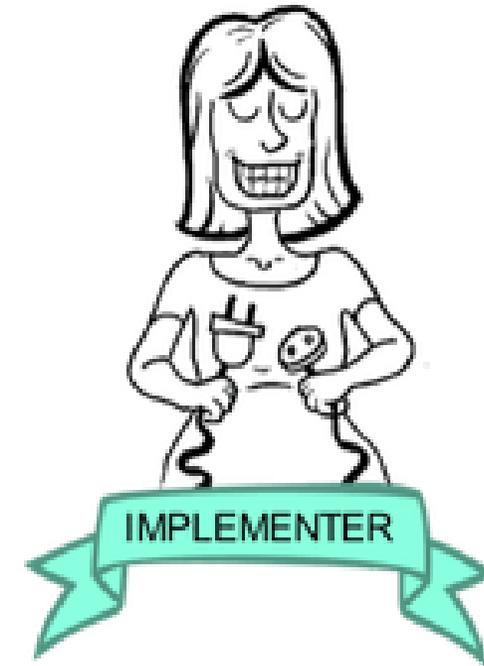
To maximise impact Researchers need to understand these roles



*Researchers need to understand that Environmental Agencies have a crucial role in the implementation of policy to bring scientific endeavour and evidence to bear on their work programmes, the application of matters such as BAT, the precautionary principle, risk assessment, and priority setting.*

*And they have a critical role in identifying knowledge gaps and specifying research needs.*

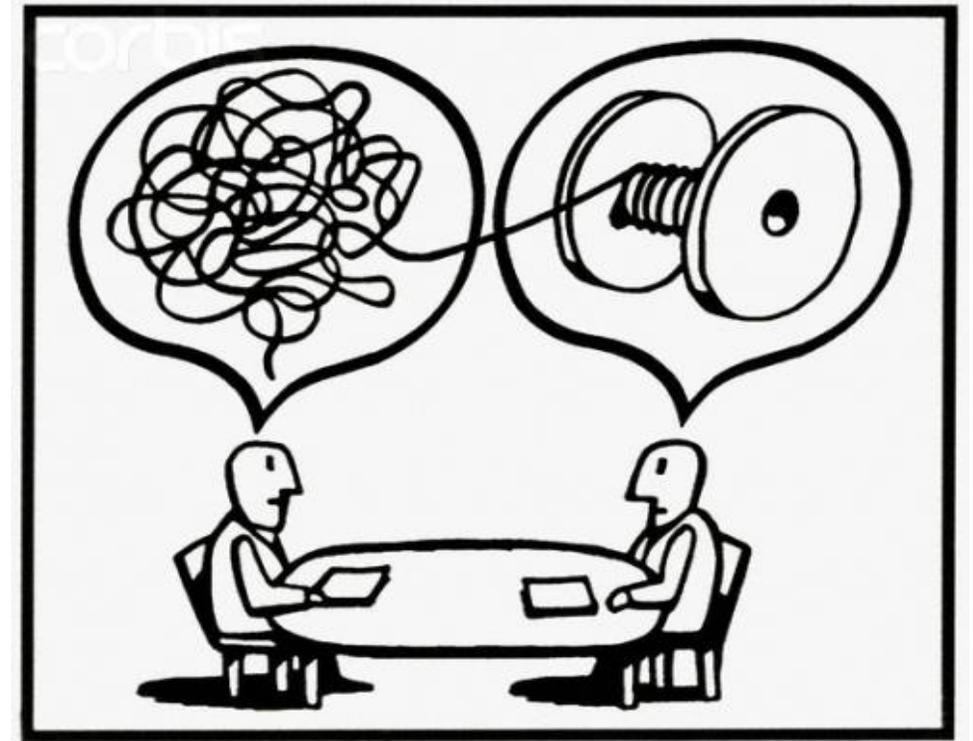
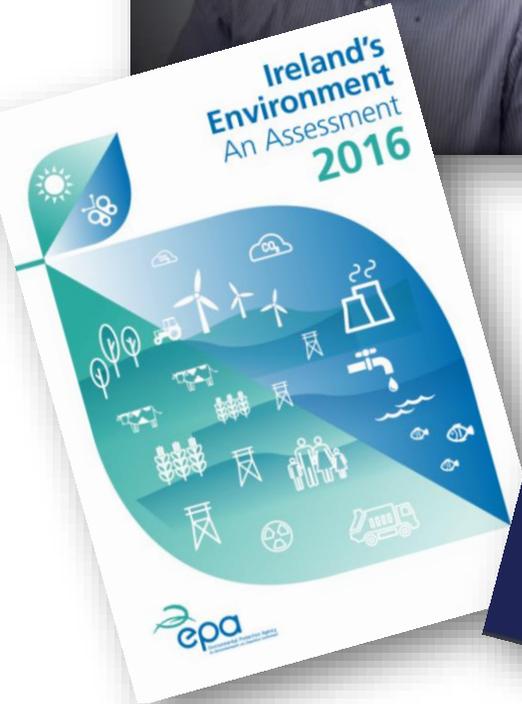
*And Implementers know a lot of useful stuff !*



**THE  
IMPLEMENTER**



# Science to Knowledge – Researchers and Research Brokers need to orientate their message to policy informing assessments



**THE INTERMEDIARY**  
(aka 'the broker')

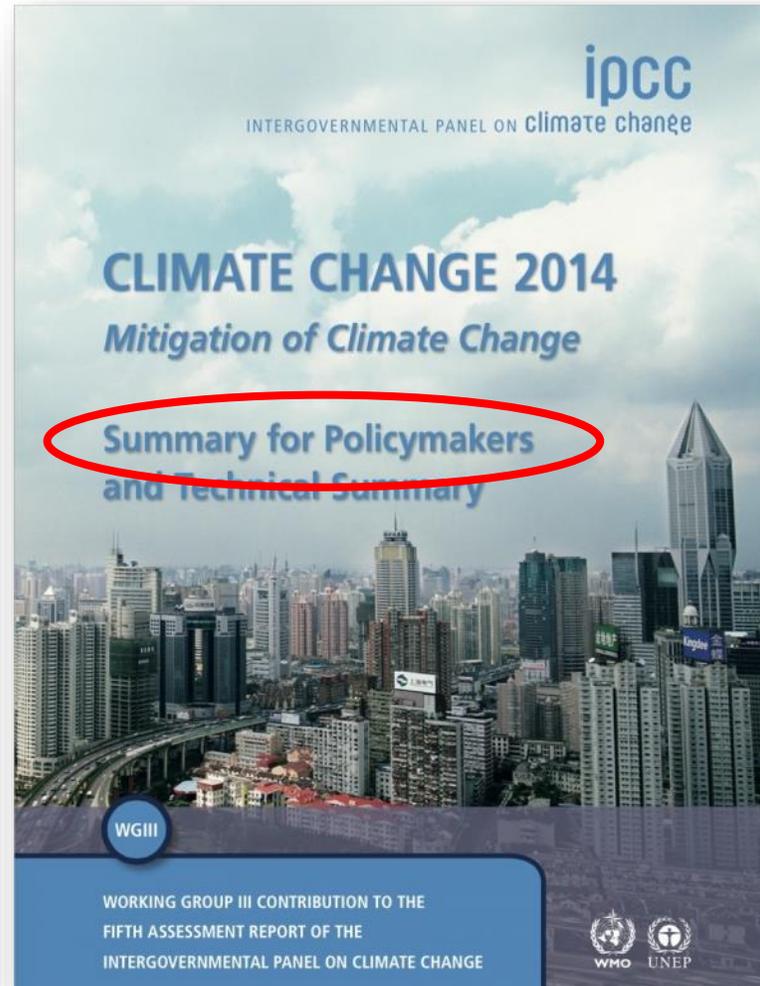
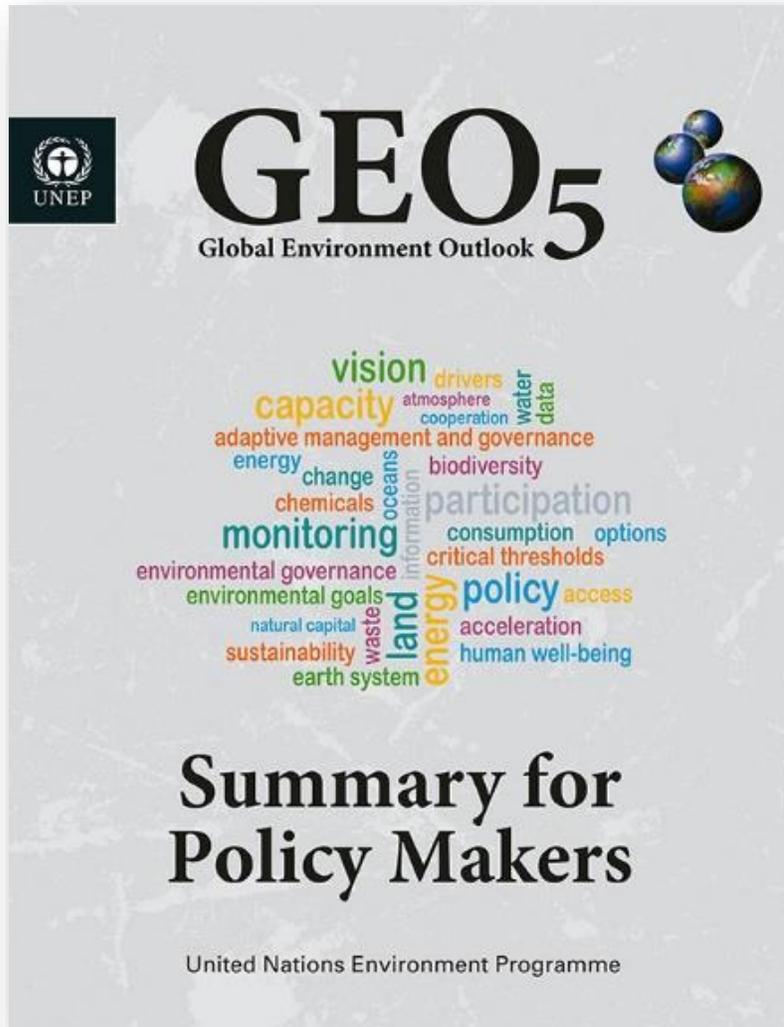


6<sup>TH</sup> EEENF, 2017

# Closing reflections ...



# The value of Synthesis Reports & Policy Oriented Summaries



EPA Research Report 223  
**A Summary of the State of Knowledge on Climate Change Impacts for Ireland**

epaResearch  
Climate - Water - Sustainability  
Identifying pressures - Learning policy - Translating solutions

Authors: Margaret Desmond, Phillip O'Brien and Frank McGovern

**Background**  
The background to this report lies with its predecessor, the first State of Knowledge on Climate Change Impacts for Ireland (Desmond et al, 2009). That report filled a large knowledge gap by providing an authoritative synthesis of the available information on climate change impacts and adaptation. Since then we've had the publication of the IPCC 5th Assessment Reports (2013) and numerous national level reports on all aspects of climate change science, impacts and adaptation. In addition, we've begun to see the implementation of adaptation at sectoral and local levels. This new reality has created an urgent need for an updated synthesis report that accurately reflects the scientific advances made nationally in knowledge and information generation. This report represents the distillation of a large body of work, largely carried out through research activities since 2009.

**Identifying Pressures**  
Changes in Ireland's climate are in-line with and similar to relevant global trends. Climate change will have diverse and wide ranging impacts on our environment, society, economic sectors and natural resources. The challenge is to provide decision makers at all levels and the general public with high quality information to make informed decisions on policy development and investments that will be resilient to the impacts of climate change. This report provides: 1) a summary of observed and projected changes in the Irish climate across a number of key parameters; 2) a synthesis of knowledge of

ongoing and anticipated climate change impacts across a number of environmental and economic sectors and; 3) recommendations for further steps required to support policy development and aid the implementation of adaptation strategies.

**Informing Policy**  
The information summarised in this report will assist in the development of coherent and rational decision making at the national, sectoral and local level, namely by:

- Providing a high level synthesis of existing climate change information across a number of key parameters such as temperature, precipitation, sea level rise and extreme weather events;
- Providing a synthesis of ongoing and anticipated climate change impacts across a large number of environmental and economic sectors;
- Providing a summary of possible adaptation options;
- Identifying knowledge gaps and suggestions on how they might be filled.

**Developing Solutions**  
This report provides Irish decision makers with an authoritative and timely summary of the state of knowledge on climate change impacts. It will assist the development of adaptation strategies and plans at national, sectoral and local level decision making. It is part of the solution to the societal challenge of transitioning to a climate resilient Ireland.

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# Get creative ...



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### Time is Running Out: Tell Congress to Support Science Funding

As Congress returns from August recess, make your voice heard about the need for federal science funding!

Make your voice heard about the value of Earth and space science as Congress makes key funding decisions!

[TAKE ACTION ▶](#)



### Welcome to AGU's Policy Action Center

At a time when federal science budgets are being slashed and the cutting-edge work of scientists is under attack, it's never been more important for interested citizens to become engaged in sharing the value of Earth and space science. You can make a difference. In both the halls of Congress and the town square, your voice is critical to ensuring that the benefits of science aren't drowned out by louder voices.

Science is essential, and it needs advocates.

### Take Action on These Important Science Policy Issues Today

See the list of current ways to take action on important science policy issues here.

#### Time is Running Out: Tell Congress to Support Science Funding

Make your voice heard about the value of Earth and space science as Congress makes key funding decisions!

#### Tell Your Legislators Why NASA Earth Science is Invaluable

NASA's Earth Science Mission is critical to our nation's economy, our national security, and our citizens' well-being.

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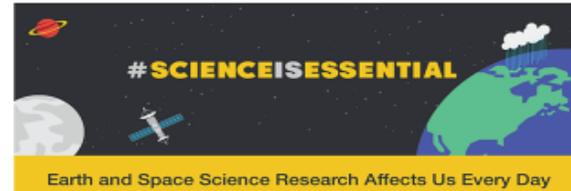
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Meet with your legislators to discuss the importance of federally funded science.

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#scienceisessential

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AGU galvanizes a community of Earth and space scientists that collaboratively advances and communicates science and its power to ensure a sustainable future.

## GET CONNECTED



Great Leaders of all-time

*Told Stories*



SCIENCE  
⚗️ ⚛️ ⚗️  
IT'S LIKE  
⚡️ MAGIC ⚡️  
BUT REAL



# Get involved ... because it matters!

- Get involved in the policy cycle
- Get involved in research planning and gap analysis – to generate the evidence you need
- Get to know the actor networks
- Get involved in SEA processes and bring research output to this policy table
- Employ social scientists
- Understand the economic cycle
- Build relationships & trust

**FACTS**  
**MATTER**  
SCIENCE MATTERS  
*people matter*  
KINDNESS MATTERS  
EQUALITY MATTERS  
FREEDOM MATTERS  
*the environment*  
MATTERS



**... what we know**

**... what we don't know**

**We know...**

**Regulation**

**Research**

**We don't know...**

**Knowledge exchange**

**Horizon Scanning**

Thank you !

