Science Policy Training

The interaction between science and policy is critical to tackling global challenges and achieving the SDGs. However, the link between knowledge and action is not automatic, and needs to be cultivated, supported and steered to where it is most needed. The objective of this training is build understanding of how the worlds of marine science and marine policy should interact to bridge the 'science-policy divide'.

This 2 hour training course will consist of three 20 minute sessions with interactive discussion after each session:

- Session 1: Understanding scientists and policy makers
- Session 2: The role of science in decision-making
- Session 3: Communication and integration across the science / policy interface

We will examine the role of science in decision-making at different levels. Using case study examples under Action Group themes, and drawing on our own experience of working within governments around the world, we will explore how science plays a critical role in informing decision-making and enabling action. This will include an examination of the different worldview, drivers and challenges faced by both scientists and policy makers in order to understand how engagement between them can be made better

Decisions in the policy world are often not clear cut and made under conditions of high uncertainty, particularly in the marine area. We will consider the limits of what science can tell decision makers, including in 'data-poor' contexts, focussing on examples such as marine spatial planning, cumulative effect assessment or the management of large offshore marine protected areas. This will lead us to focus in some detail on the management of uncertainty, including the role of the precautionary approach and risk-based decision making, which are critical in the use of science by decision-makers.

We will identify how science can be best communicated to support decision making, understanding how government works and the pressures which decision-makers face. In situations of high uncertainty and with complicated trade-offs communication is vital in informing options, so that the decision-maker can make good decisions based on the best available evidence.

We will discuss how scientific research and knowledge is accessed including knowledge and data-sharing platforms, reviewing the role of online resources and evidence sharing initiatives such as Reference User Groups. We will also highlight the increasing importance of 'Knowledge Brokers'; establishing relationships with external research institutions or policy institutes to support knowledge transfer.

Discussion will be made of how governments can establish strategic research agenda to steer scientific effort to the critical questions facing decision-making and policy delivery.

Lastly, and moving beyond traditional approaches to development of science to inform policy, we will explore the cutting edge debates and perspectives on the way that knowledge generation is changing, and the importance of "knowledge co-creation" which is needed to enhance science-policy dialogues.