The Future of Science Policy Interface

A contribution to UNEP@50 and Beyond

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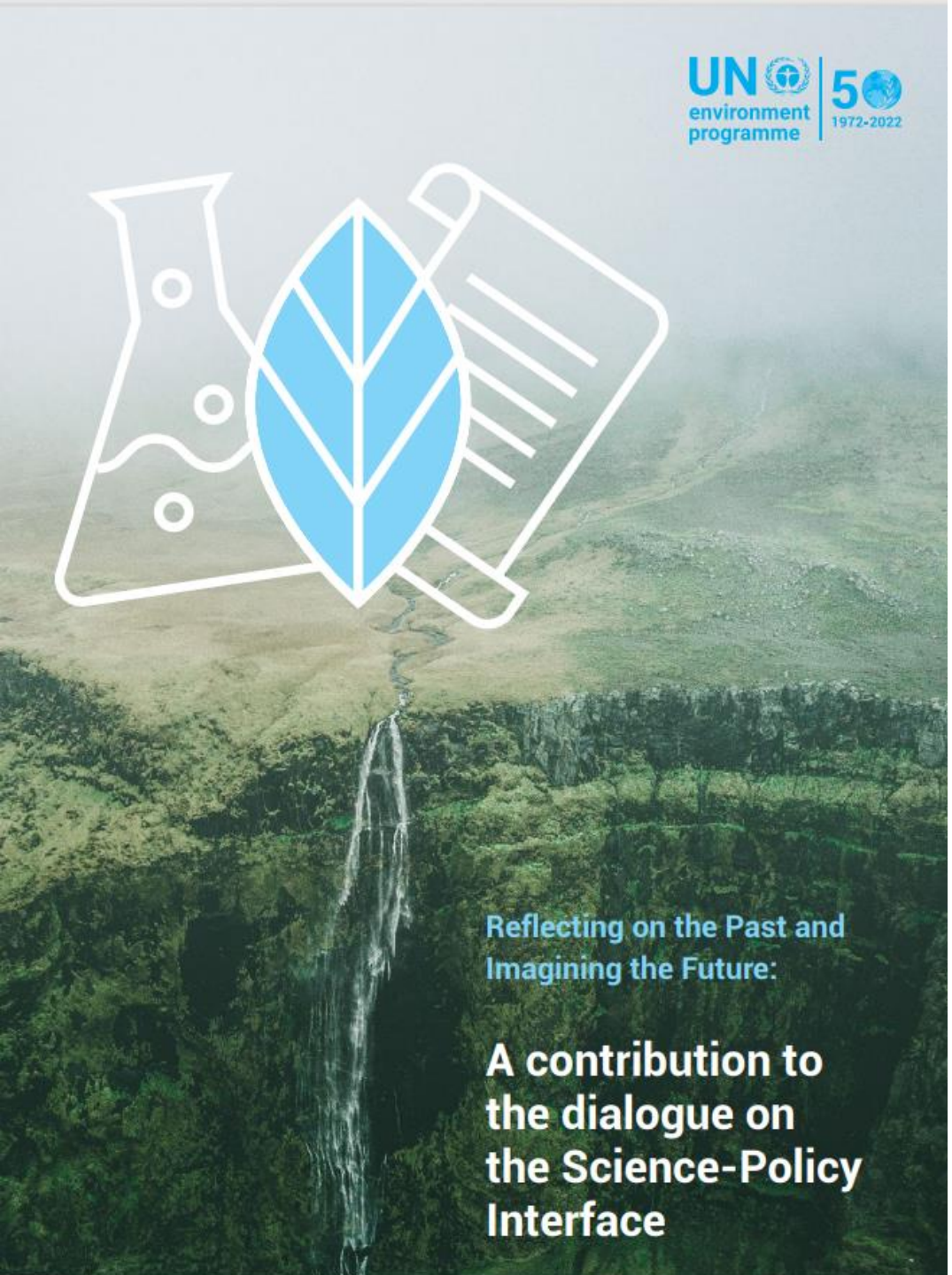


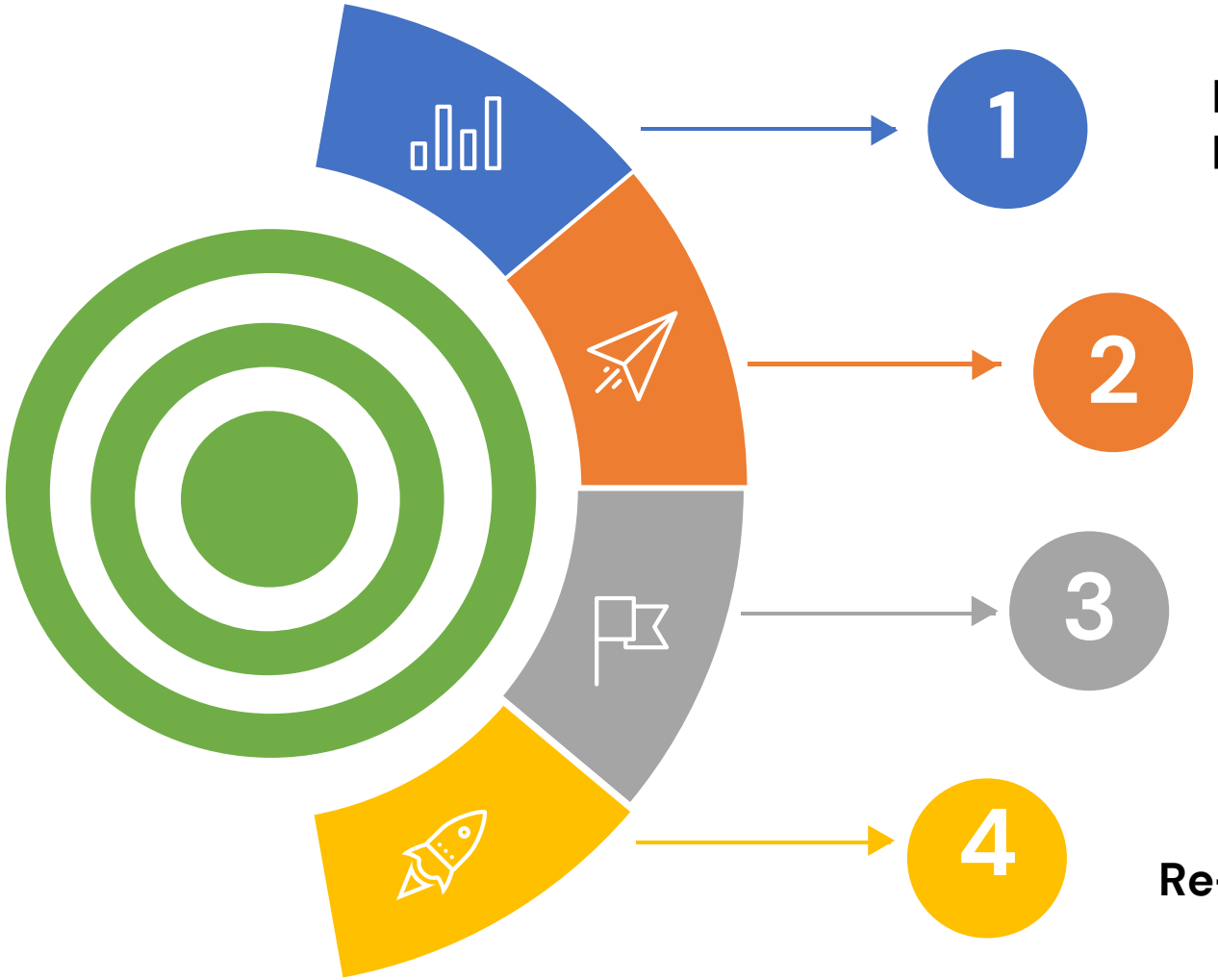
About the Report

- Forward looking document with key messages focusing on science-policy interfaces.
- Focused on some unconventional approaches/ideas/analyses to give it more edge (eg. SPSI and behavioural change).
- Is short, have some examples, case studies, quotes, and references to key lessons learned thus far on how SPI has contributed to environmental management (UNEP and non-UNEP).
- Focused primarily on issues related to climate change, biodiversity, and pollution, as key themes, though other environmental issues were considered as needed.

The UNEP@50 Report

Purpose and Focus

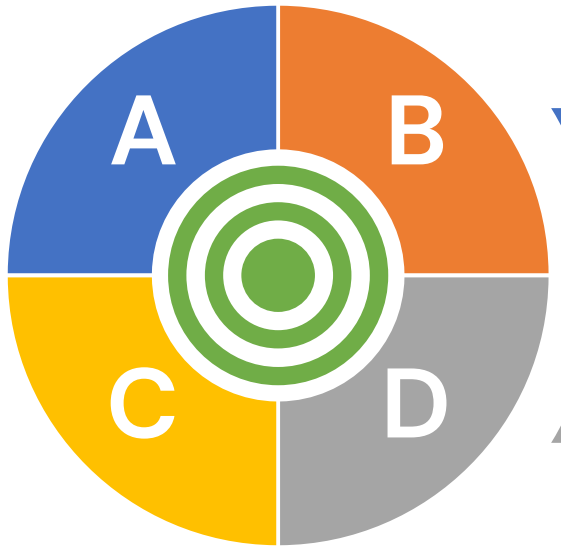
Future science policy interfaces in the context of environmental management and governance



1. **Functioning of Science policy interfaces**
2. **Influence on environmental management and governance**
3. **Key lessons learnt**
4. **Re-imagining the future**

Role of SPI

- Impact
- Trends
- Influence
- Response



Effective, equitable, and inclusive approaches and policies on the best available scientific information

Deepening understanding and options for solutions increasing

Social and political influence changing

Need for science policy society interface

Our Common Agenda

Response by the Report

1 Inclusivity

2 Focus

3 Behaviour

4 Technology

Many successful Approaches

- Reports (eg GEO, Making Peace with Nature, Litter ….)
- Science-Policy Platforms (independent Resources Panel, IPBES, IPCC, Science-Policy Business Forum)
- Actor coalitions (e.g. Climate and Clean Air Coalition, UNEP FI, WWQA)
- Campaigns (Breathe Life, Green Nudges)
- Formal UN collaborations
- Environment Initiative
- International Regimes

Photo: UN Photo/Fred Noy

https://www.ccacoalition.org/en/content/short-lived-climate-pollutants-slcps

Where we are in 2021 – Science to Policy - Impact

- Many successful interventions to change the trajectory of environmental degradation
- The availability of scientific knowledge and evidence alone has not been sufficient to influence political outcomes and environmentally sound choices, policies at scale.
- The gap between science and its use for improving outcomes and affecting change has catalyzed interest to better understand how science-policy activities can more effectively lead to change.
- Collective action problems in the 21st Century have put the multilateral system to a critical test.
- Our Common Agenda: has voiced strong support for international cooperation, and a desire for new forms of inclusivity, more networked problem-solving and more effective multilateralism.
- Improving the delivery, coherence, and uptake of science for transformative action, and closing environmental data gaps are key priorities in this pursuit.

https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/this-tragic-bushfire-crisis-is-our-pearl-harbor-moment/news-story/e9f0cce6fc2511b72dbbc1b325a85eb5

Key Observations

A

SPI is non-linear

B

Political processes are integral to SPI functioning and evolution

C

SPI movement towards crafting solutions than stating problems

D

Need right actors, right evidence and productive exchange

Lessons learnt

Socio-political-economic contexts have changed

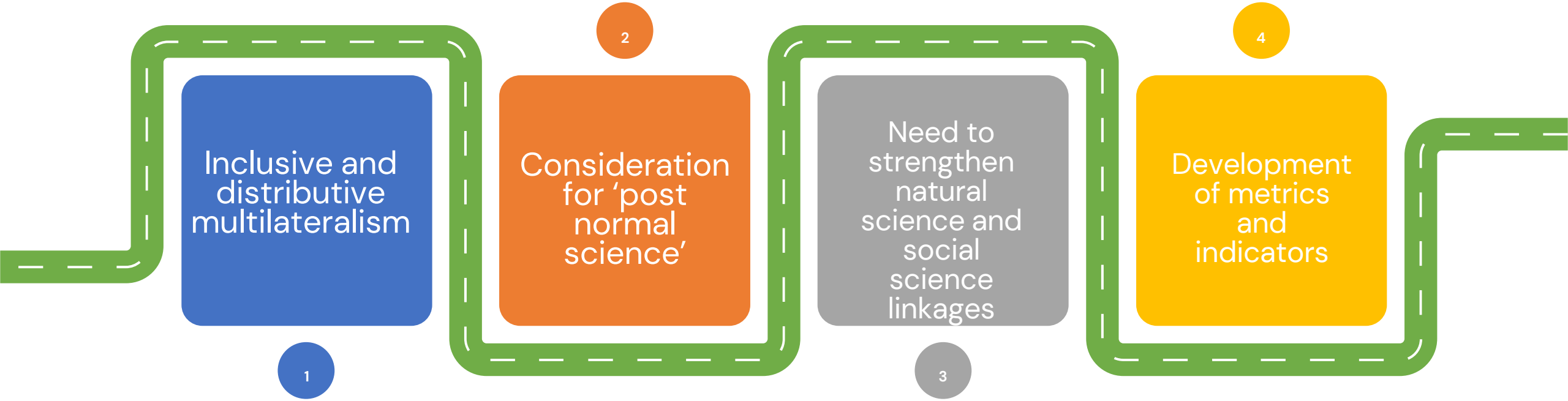
Science evolving rapidly but policy struggles to keep up the speed

Social consciousness and awareness increasing

Interactions between sector in society are changing

Uncertainty and risks challenge decision making

Considerations for SPI

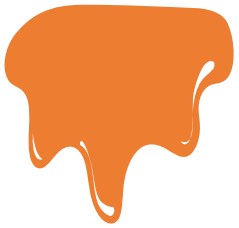


Future Considerations

01

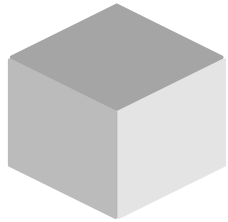
Environmental multilateralism relies of effective SPS interface

02



Focus on science policy society links critical making policy making transdisciplinary and multi-sectoral

03

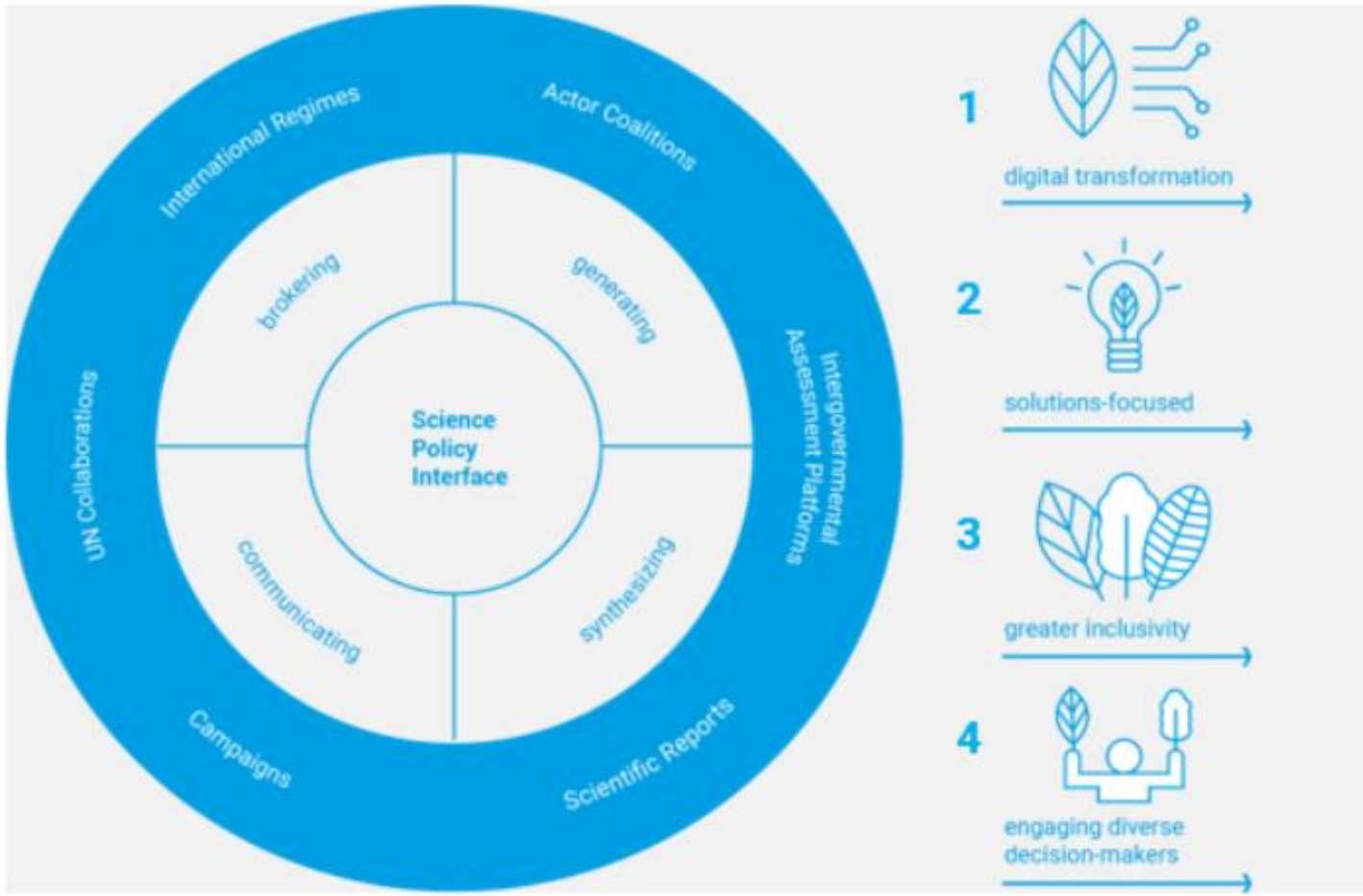


SPS should consider knowledge as a factor than information

Enablers……

- Addressing traditional knowledge
- Engaging a broader array of stakeholders
- Efficiency and transparency in scientific effort
- Open and accessible data information and knowledge
- Need to be able to deal with more complexity, more reflexive dynamic, agile models
- Help facilitate the exchange of scientific evidence and place it in the context of surrounding social values and make use of the social and behavioural sciences

UNEP's Future SPI:
Four pre-conditions for success



enabling open accessible and transparent data, information and knowledge

Placing significantly more emphasis on solutions, rather than challenges and barriers

Embracing a more diverse range of stakeholders, partners and

Engaging with a variety of decision-makers and influencers

Positioning for the future

- The *status quo* and incidental adjustments in the way decisions are made and mandates are established must change.
- Science-policy-society interfaces should redefine the ways in which reports are prepared and used, in addition to developing appropriate data management and governance policies to find effective solutions to counting all that needs to be counted.
- Any actions that emerge from the science-policy-society interface thus need to be 'social-proofed'
- Policy design needs to be based on science but also must be co-created with communities to ensure sustainable and equitable human development.
- UNEP should position itself more as an 'enabler' and facilitator of solutions. UNEP's role in guiding and advising UN agencies, governments, and civil society, including the private sector, should be strengthened with better internal mechanisms for effectively using science policy interfaces.
- UNEP should emerge more stogngly as the 'team of teams.'

UNCCD and SPI Panel

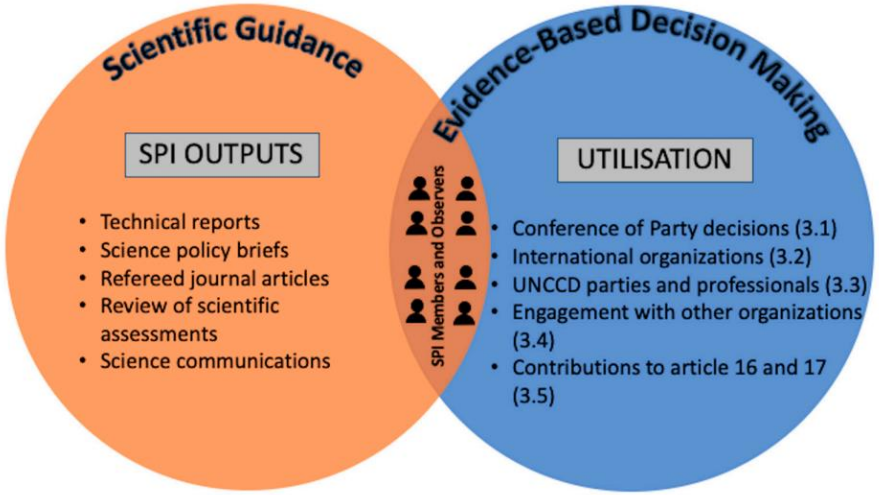
land

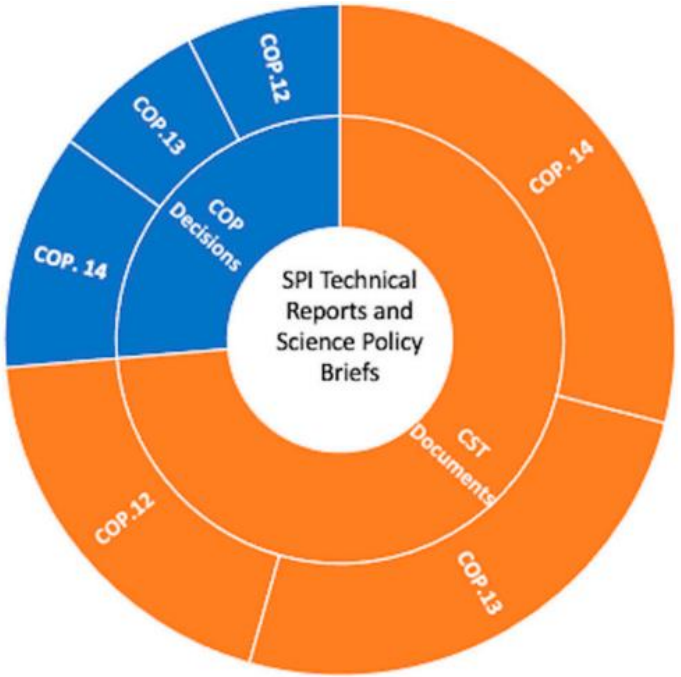
MDPI

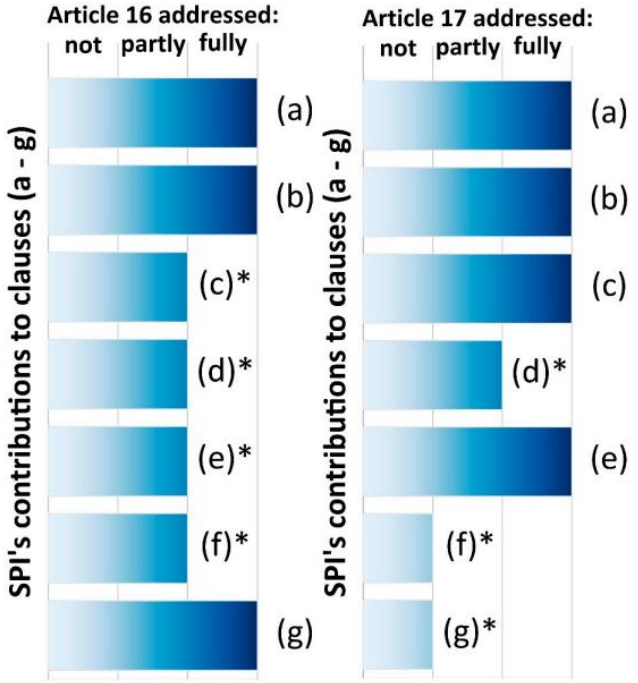
Article

Assessing the Impact of Science in the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Mariam Akhtar-Schuster [1], Lindsay C. Stringer [2,*], Graciela Metternicht [3], Nichole N. Barger [4], Jean-Luc Chotte [5] and German Kust [6]

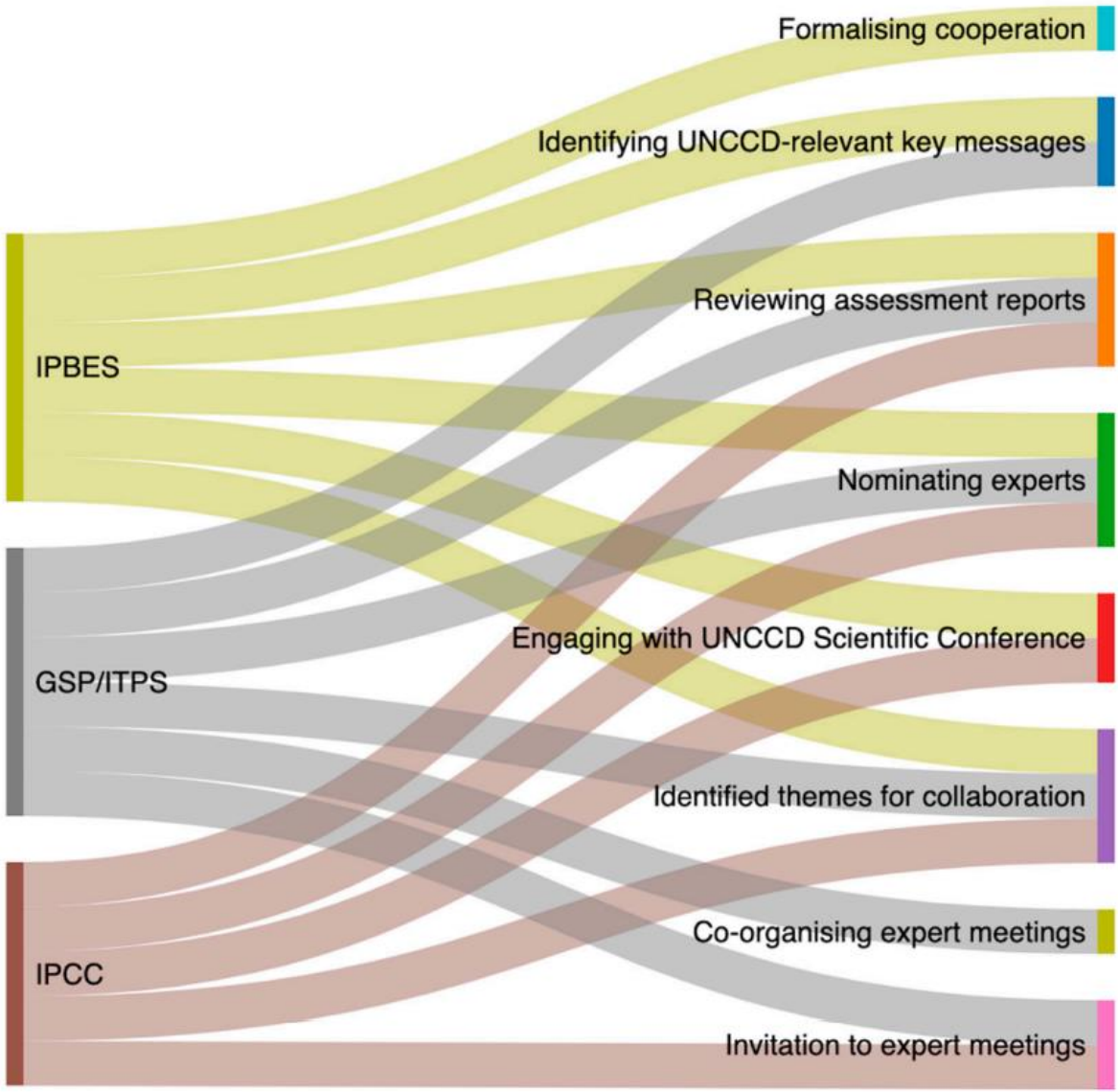


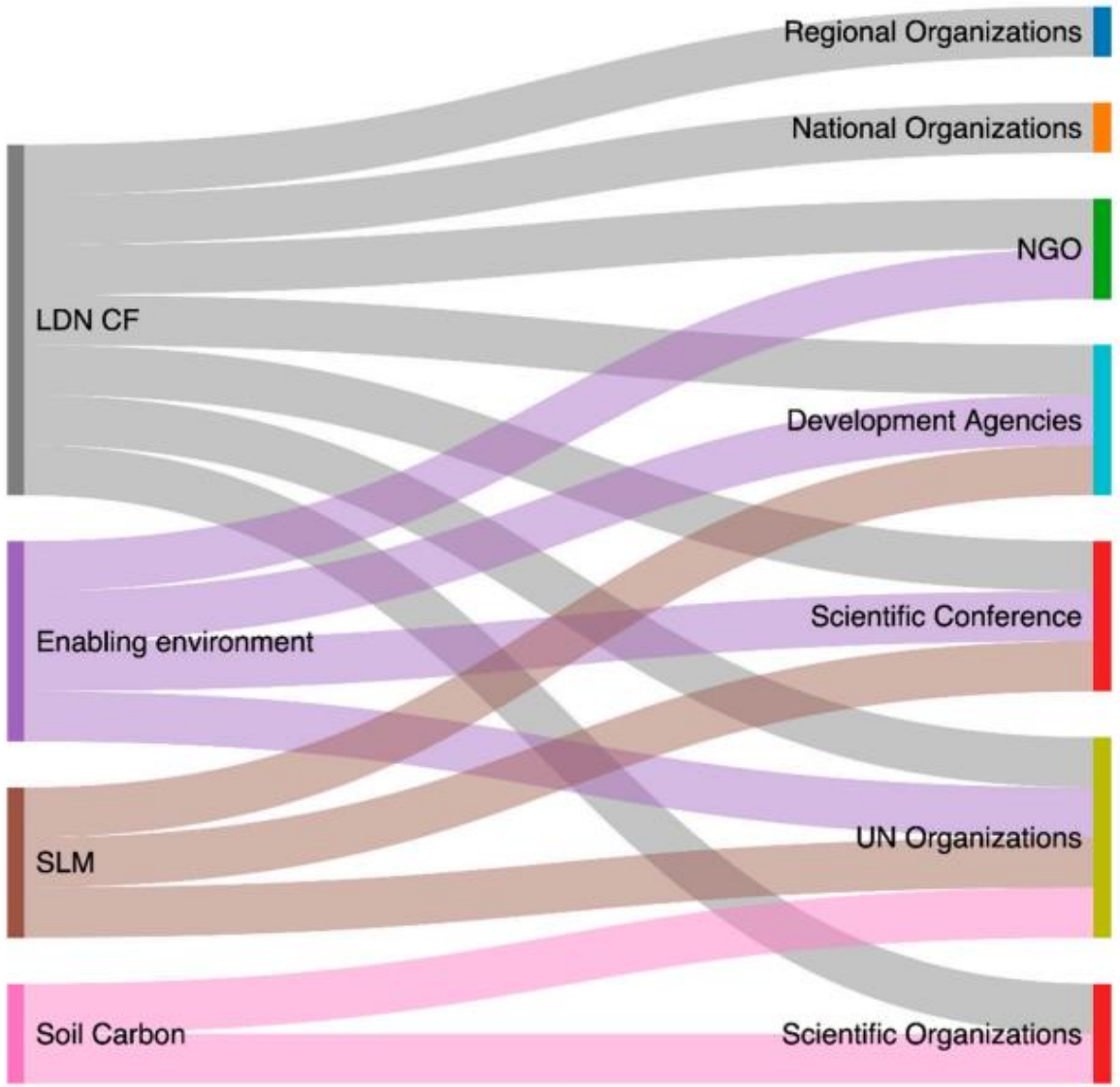




Mariam Akhter Schuster et.al. 2022

SPI in UNCCD





Mariam Akhter Schuster et.al. 2022

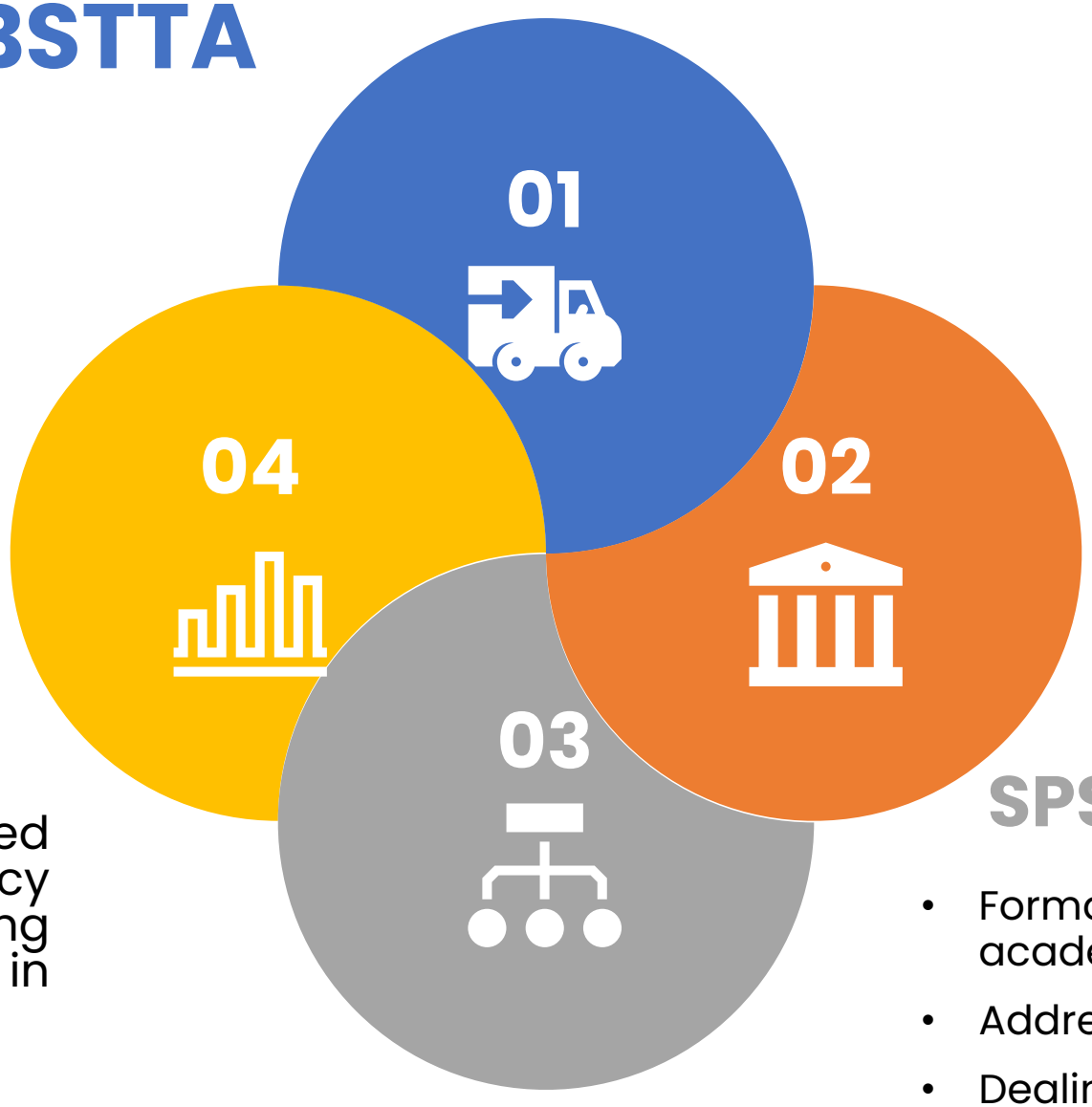
Some parting thoughts!

- Articles 8, 12, 16, 17 and 18 are directly relevant to SPS Interface
- Formal focus on science-policy-society interface will help improve the focus and efficiency of the Convention
- Having a programmatic approach to SPS Interface will help mainstream the objectives of the Convention
- The Convention can become more proactive and supportive of actions at various levels, especially at national level if the Science Policy Panel can provide guidance
- Both foresight and horizon scanning can help the Parties to pro-actively deal with implementation more effectively.

For Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

SBSTTA

- Science as key consideration
- Science in defining targets and indicators
- Strengthened links with scientific bodies, academies



SBI

- Using science to plan the implementation
- Addressing the Science-Policy-Society Interface
- Responding to experiences, informing science

COP

- Make decisions based on science, policy needs and keeping future (horizon) in mind

SPS Interface Panel ?

- Formal link with scientists, academies, policy institutions
- Addressing emerging issues
- Dealing with foresight

Thank you !