

“Science for policy – Challenges and opportunities”

Estonian Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU

8th November 2023

Science for policy in Estonia

Lorenzo Melchor, PhD

Policy Analyst

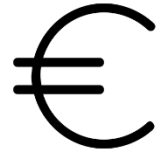
Science for democracy and evidence-informed policymaking Unit

Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission

Lorenzo.Melchor-Fernandez@ec.europa.eu



What we are talking about



Policy for science

- Planning of the science, technology and innovation system
- Research funding programmes
- Embedded and aligned with international, national and subnational policy frameworks
- Scientists are **proactive** stakeholders, policymakers and advocates

Science for policy

- Inform any public policy with the up-to-date scientific evidence
- Decision-making is the politician's responsibility
- Science advisers offer scientific knowledge, policy options, risk assessments, and contact with the wider scientific community
- Scientists are usually **reactive** stakeholders, at the demand of the policymaker



Brooks H (1964) "The scientific advisor" In R. Gilpin and C Wright (eds.) *Scientists and national policymaking*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, pp 73-96

COVID-19 crisis



SOUTH EUROPEAN SOCIETY AND POLITICS
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2021.1983932>



RESEARCH ARTICLE



Regaining Trust: Evidence-Informed Policymaking during the First Phase of the Covid-19 Crisis in Greece

Stella Ladi^a, Angelos Angelou^b and Dimitra Panagiotatou^c

Humanities & Social Sciences
 Communications



ARTICLE

<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01097-5> OPEN



Evaluation of science advice during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden

Nele Brusselaers^{1,2,3,4,6}, David Steadson⁵, Kelly Björklund^{6,7}, Sofia Breland⁶, Jens Stilloff Sörensen^{4,9}, Andrew Ewing^{4,10}, Sigurd Bergmann^{4,11} & Gunnar Steineck^{4,12}

Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas
 Recibido: 24-09-2021
 Aceptado: 02-09-2022
 Prepublicado: 25-10-2022
 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24965/gapp.10991>

Creative Commons Reconocimiento-NoComercial 4.0 Internacional



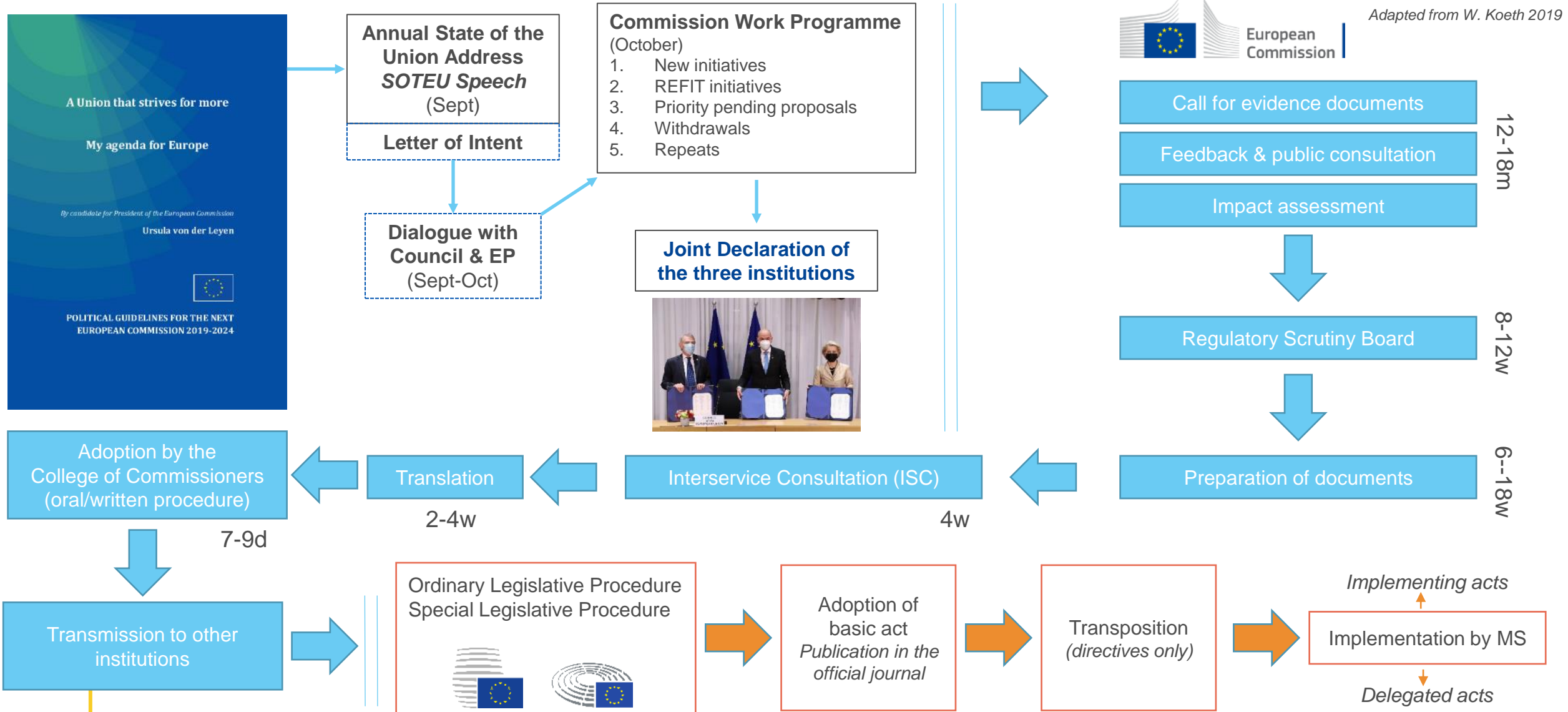
Descripción y análisis del ecosistema de ciencia para la política en España durante la COVID-19¹

Description and analysis of the science for policy ecosystem in Spain during COVID-19

Melchor, Lorenzo
 Centro Común de Investigación (Joint Research Centre, JRC), Comisión Europea, Bruselas (Bélgica)²
 ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5322-2817>
lorenzo.melchor-fernandez@ec.europa.eu

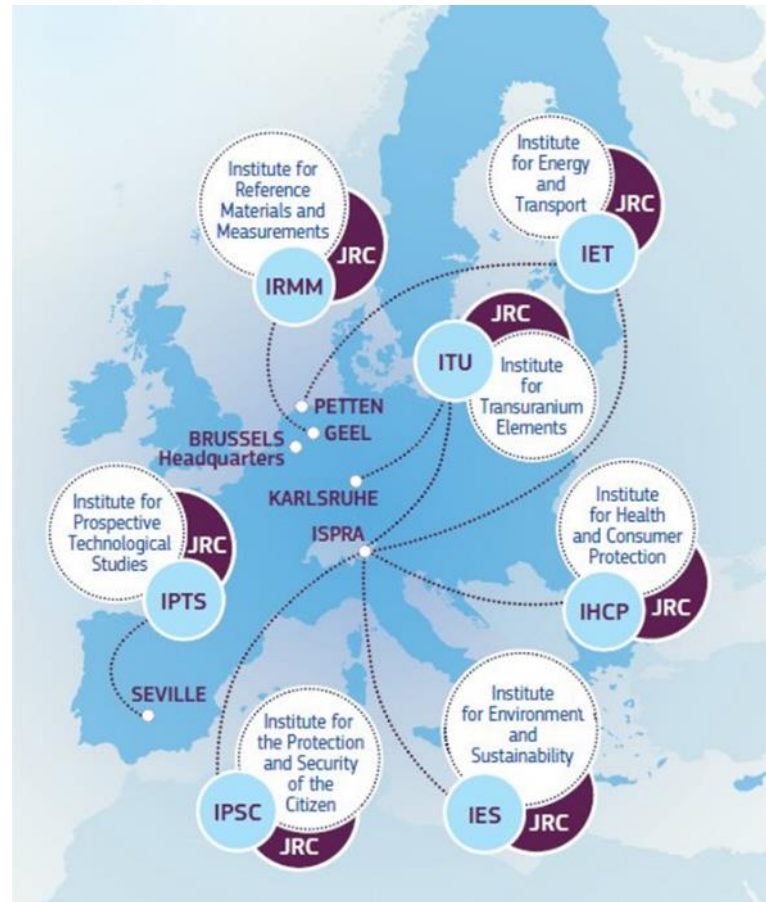


Overview of EU policymaking



The Joint Research Centre (JRC)

- Science and knowledge service
- Research centre providing science advice in support of EU policies
- Directorate General under Commissioner Iliana Ivanova
- Board of Governors
- 2000+ active scientists, across 6 sites and different KC and CC



Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic

“While policy making and public messaging during the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be informed by the latest scientific advice, the early months of the crisis exposed **the uneven level of research and advice in different Member States**, as well as the different approaches taken to providing and using that advice. This meant that **evidence was patchy, sometimes contradictory and often confusing** as a result of different messaging in different Member States.”

EC “Drawing early lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic”, COM(2021) 380

Publication of a Commission Document



A shared vision for science for policy

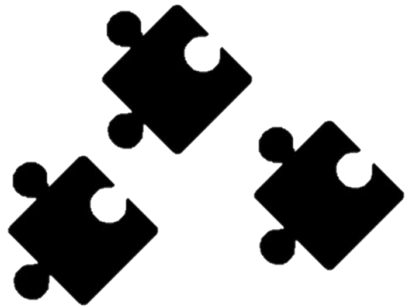
EU Support for science for policy

The state-of-play and gaps

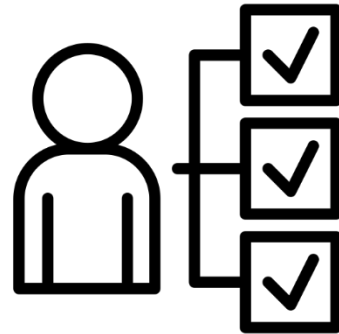
Promote national and European debate

<https://europa.eu/!fwYr7f>

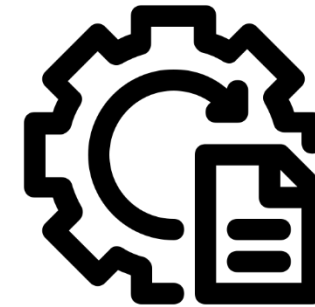
Three challenges to science for policy



Institutional environment:
missing connections
& coordination



Individual capacities:
missing
competences and
inter-sectoral
understanding

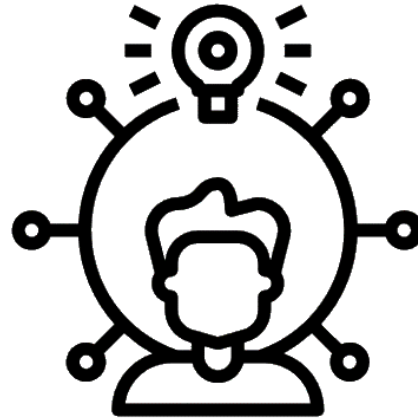


Good governance of evidence use:
Limits of science and
policymaking

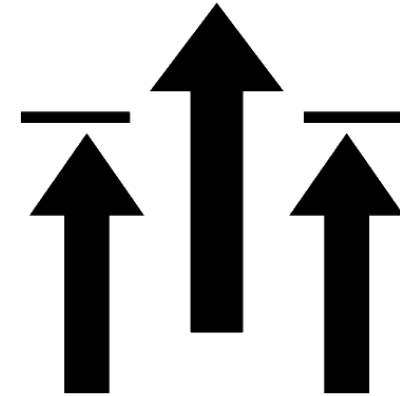
Three types of EU support to address them



**Institutional
capacity &
professional
network building**



**Professional
competence &
inter-sectoral
professional
schemes for
knowledge
exchange**



**Knowledge on
science-for-policy
ecosystems,
practices, and
capacity & limits**

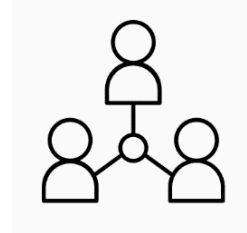


Science-for-policy ecosystems



Use of experts in Public Admin

- Scientific councils
- Scientific committees
- Ad hoc committees
- Public observatories
- Government think tanks
- National academies
- Learned societies
- Policy units at RPO



Internal capacity of public administration

- Networks of science advisers
- Networks of data analysts
- Networks of foresight
- Networks of policy evaluators
- Foresight and planning offices
- STI parliamentary offices
- Technical advisers to committees
- Research libraries



Processes for knowledge exchange

- Call for evidence
- Areas of Research Interest
- Policy evaluation
- Impact assessment
- Strategic foresight
- Anticipatory governance
- AI and data governance
- Open governance
- Deliberative democracy
- Innovation camps
- Pairing schemes
- Details and rotations
- Fellowships in public admin

National mapping and reform exercises

- 16 workshops with 2400+ participants (including **Estonia** on 9th March 2021)
- Mapping the science-for-policy ecosystems and recommendations for policy change
- Publication of expert discussion papers (DK, EL, PT, FR, ES). For Estonia, a 4 page document.
- Survey with 500 responses from S4P experts and practitioners (in press)
- Series turned into collaborations with the Council of the EU Presidency (FR, ES, soon BE)

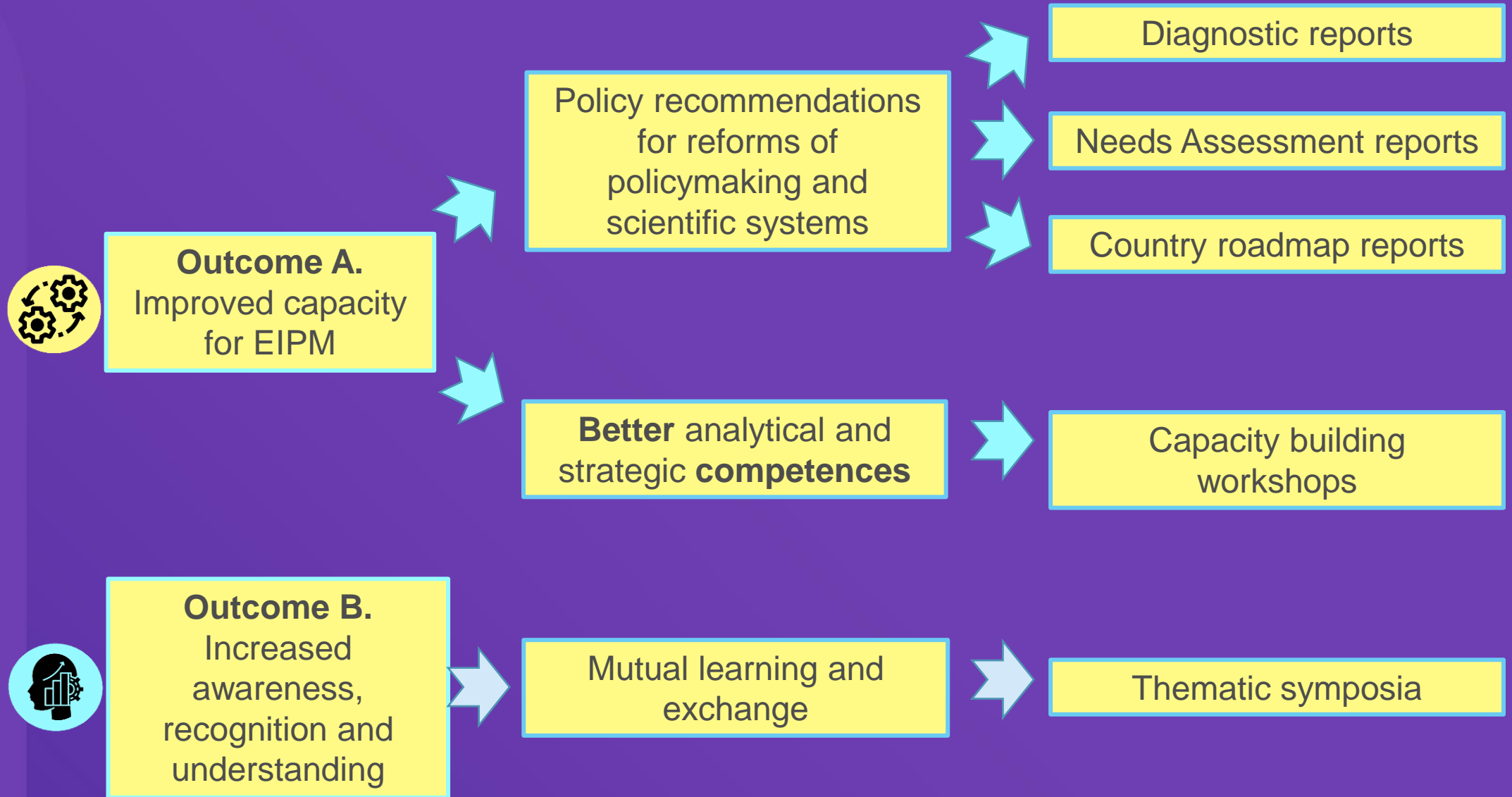


Building capacity for
evidence-informed
policymaking in governance
and public administration in a
post-pandemic Europe



#Science4Policy

Project overview



Project timeline

2023				2024			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

✓★ Kick-off

Final conference ★

COUNTRY ANALYSES / POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Diagnostic report



Needs assessment



Roadmap



Final report

CAPACITY BUILDING



Workshops for scientists



Workshops for policymakers



Workshop for knowledge brokers

MUTUAL LEARNING



1st Thematic Symposia



2nd Thematic Symposia

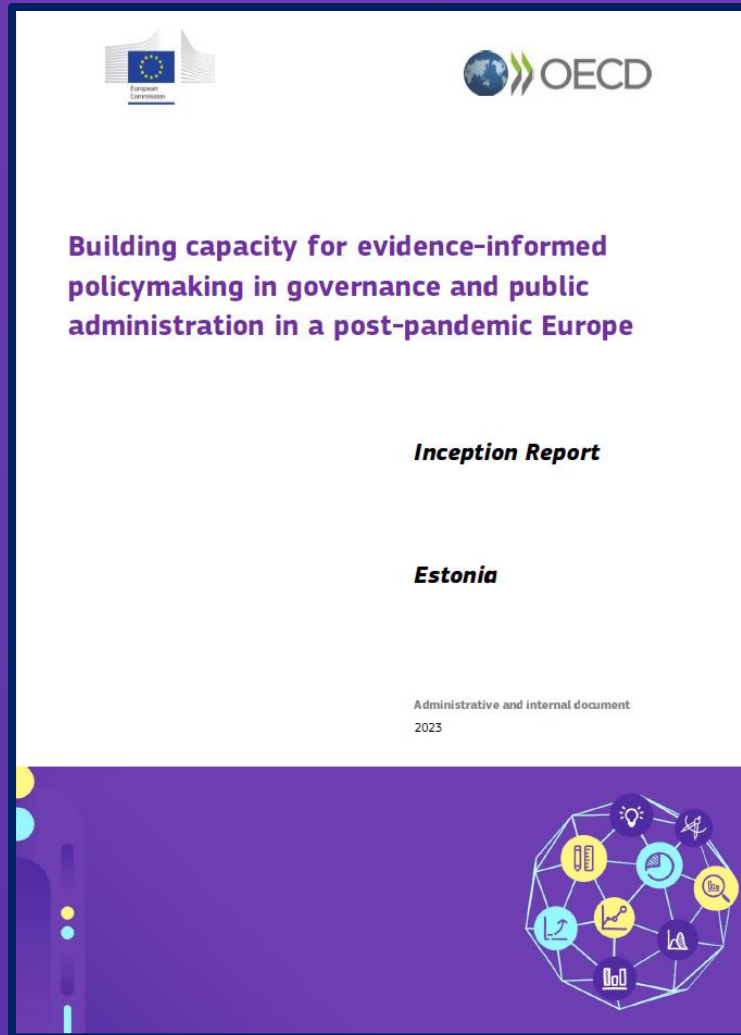


3rd Thematic Symposia

The project kicked off in EE last 30 March 2023



Estonia Inception Report



Project objectives in Estonia:

1. Strengthening EIPM networks and processes in the EE administration
2. Promoting an organization-culture change within the Estonian scientific community for EIPM

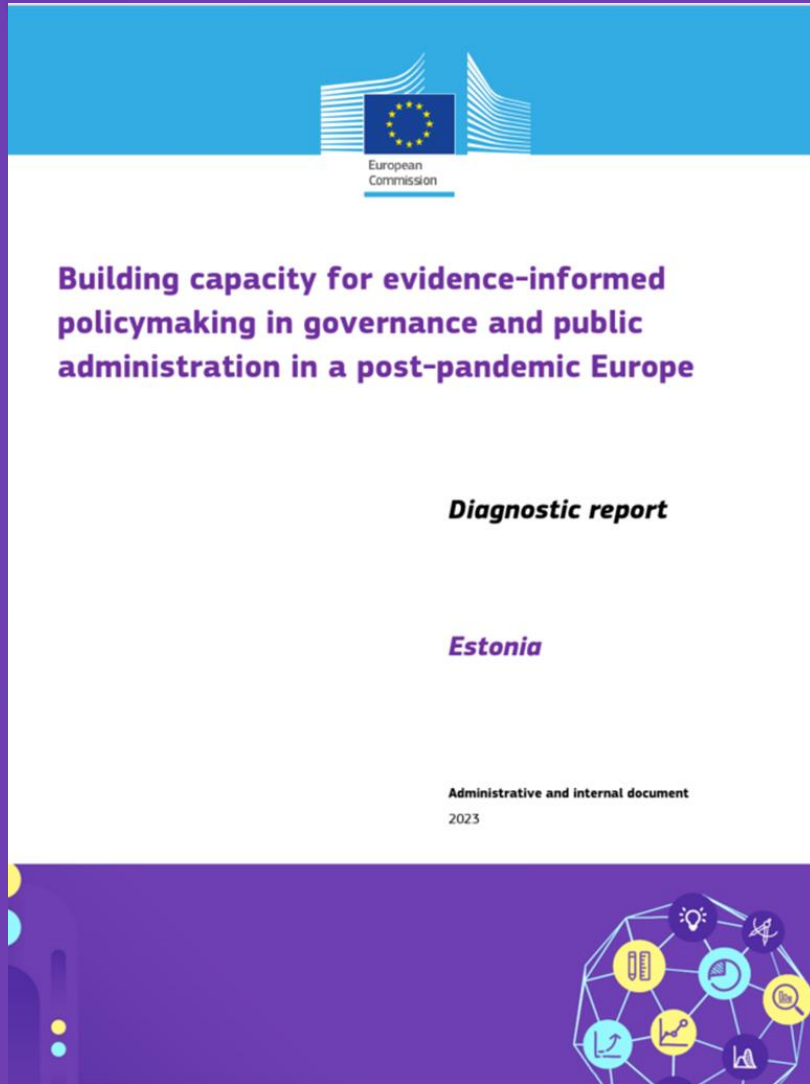
To consider:

- ongoing public admin reforms,
- secure political support across government departments, and
- focus on changes at the level of the science and innovation system

A general analytical framework

ANALYTICAL LEVEL	SUPPLY OF SCIENCE AND EVIDENCE	DEMAND OF SCIENCE AND EVIDENCE	PRACTICES WHERE SUPPLY AND DEMAND MEET
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional and team competences Incentives to engage in science for policy Career profiles, mobility programmes and challenges 		
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandates & missions Dedicated structures, processes & support for science for policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of civil service in policymaking Resources and staff suitable for evidence-informed policymaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better regulation, RIA, budgets, foresight, knowledge valorisation, policy evaluation, science advice, planning, research commissioning
Inter-organisational level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination mechanisms & boundary organisations for policy engagement Role and functions of scientific councils, academies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-institutional coordination (e.g. knowledge sharing mechanisms) Boundary organisations and actors to engage with scientific community and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European commitments and processes (Structural Funds, Green and Digital Transition, RRP, HE, ERA, etc.)
Systems / policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies on research assessment, inter-sectoral mobility, research funding, etc. promoting EIPM-culture and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies/processes/norms promoting EIPM-culture and values, public trust, and processes between branches of public administration 	

Estonia Diagnostic Report

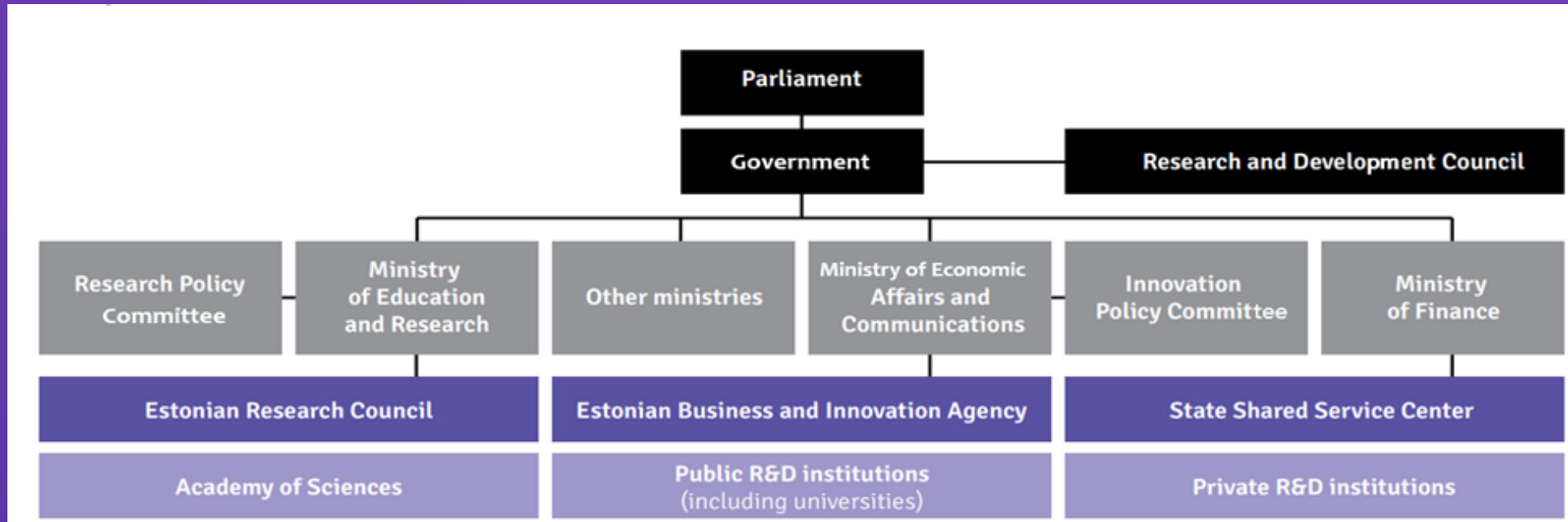


- Written by a group of national experts and revised by the JRC and OECD
- Describes the status quo of the capacities for EIPM in Estonia
- Applies the analytical framework to EE
- Based on:
 - Desk research
 - Questionnaires to key actors (35 responses)
 - Interviews (25)
- It will be part of a final country report at the end of the project

2. Demand side

- Mapped the stakeholders
- Culture and attitude towards EIPM
- Policy frameworks, guidelines and practices
- Internal capacity to engage with EIPM
- Competences, trainings and motivation of the work force

Map of stakeholders



Source: Estonian Research Council, image published in their yearly report from 2022 (Raudvere 2022, p7)

Demand side

Strengths

- ✓ Clear understanding that building the capacity for EIPM is a necessary aspect
- ✓ Many informal networks are actively supporting EIPM
- ✓ The government is supporting innovative solutions
- ✓ The regulated ex-ante impact assessment works well, though can depend on the individual case/ministry.
- ✓ The staff is highly motivated to improve and take part in trainings.

Weaknesses

- ❖ Both public administration and political leadership ignores EIPM too often for efficiency and other political factors.
- ❖ The level of data literacy is low.
- ❖ Networks are not fully formalized and often lack a mandate.
- ❖ Procurement laws and structural constraints make the knowledge transfer with universities and research institutions very hard.
- ❖ There is a lack of ex-post assessments.

Supply side

Strengths

- ✓ Awareness and compliance with the EIPM rules in the public sector is high
- ✓ All institutions (public sector, universities) value EIPM and perceive it as part of their duty
- ✓ Motivated staff

Weaknesses

- ❖ Fragmentation of the EIPM system, possible overlap of research questions
- ❖ Poor availability of resources (no central repository)
- ❖ Poor quality of data and the research reports due to strict time-frames
- ❖ Research ethics, role conflicts (small country problems)
- ❖ Overworked staff

Where demand and supply meet

Good practices

- ✓ Ministerial science adviser's network / RITA programme (HTM/ETAG)
- ✓ Strategic foresight is present at parliament and in some gov departments
- ✓ Innovation team at the Government Office to drive public innovation across ministries
- ✓ Strategic use of EU funds to promote EIPM

Challenges

- ❖ One-point access data repository
- ❖ Scientific networks and organisations are yet perceived primarily as advocacy groups. No scientific organization has specialized itself in occupying a niche to closely collaborate with policymakers

Conclusion – Estonian S4P ecosystem

Strengths

- ✓ The general structure of the EIPM system is almost in place
- ✓ At large, the introduction of the science advisers must be seen as a great success.
- ✓ The government promotes public innovation
- ✓ Willingness from the Government Office to coordinate and develop further EIPM in Estonia
- ✓ R&D funding has been made a priority by all political parties.

Weaknesses

- ❖ EIPM is often ignored
- ❖ Level of data literacy is low as is the willingness/capability to listen to science advice
- ❖ Networks are not sufficiently formalized
- ❖ High staff turnover
- ❖ Scattered system of science advice
- ❖ No incentives for academics to engage in policy advice

Next steps: focus groups 29N-1D

- 1) Evidence-informed policymaking: from the network of science advisers to decision-makers and politicians
- 2) Innovative policymaking in action: competences and awareness in public service
- 3) Science for policy in the scientific community: capacity-building workshops, academic incentives, academic support, and other policy engagement opportunities.
- 4) Integrating foresight practices into policymaking across government
- 5) Coordination and support mechanisms for evidence-informed policymaking

Needs and gaps assessment report preparation

Special thanks

Academy of Sciences
Chancellor of Justice Office
Estonian Research Council
Estonian University of Life Sciences
Foresight Centre
Government Office
Innovation Team
Ministry of Climate / Ministry of Environment*
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications
Ministry of Education and Research
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Rural Affairs
Ministry of Social Affairs
National Audit Office
Rector's Conference
Statistics Estonia
Tallinn University
Tallinn University of Technology
Tartu University
Parliament of Estonia
Universities Estonia (Rectors' Conference)

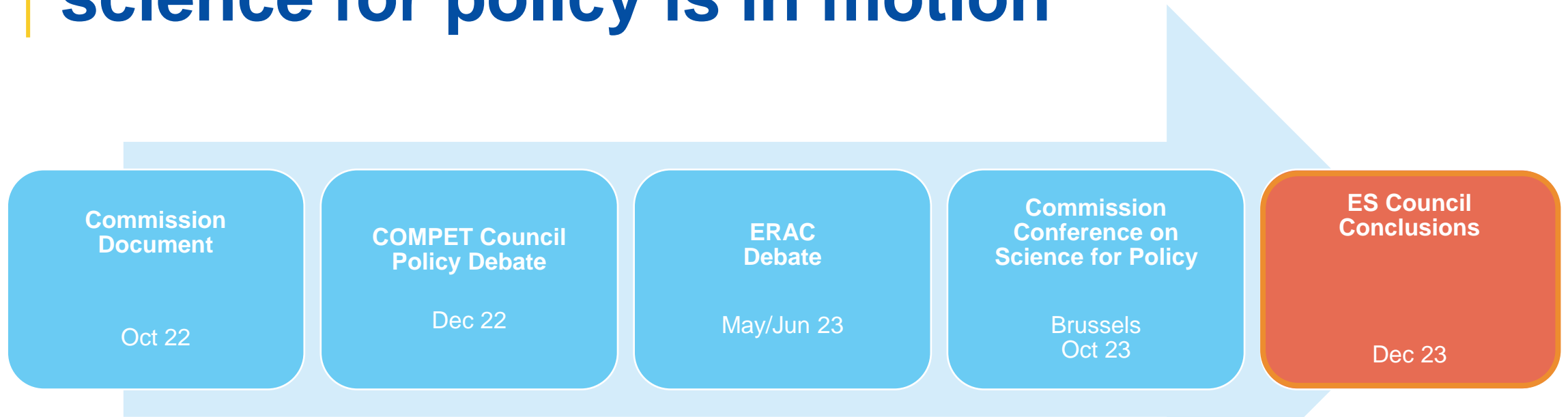
DG Reform
Athina Manta

Joint Research Centre (JRC)
Lorenzo Melchor
Kristian Krieger
Mara Silva Almeida
Agnieszka Gadzina-Kolodjieska
David Mair

OECD
Piret Tonurist
Stéphane Jacobzone
Claire Salama
Silvia Picalarga

JRC Group of national experts
Benjamin Klasche
Marju Raju
Andres Koppel
Peeter Selg

A political process in support of science for policy is in motion



Role for Estonia...

- What is your desired role to further promote science for policy at the EU level? Better policies from public administration and from R&D to support it?
- Would you like to interact in the following stages of the EE TSI analysis?
- EE is also being showcased as an innovative country (science adviser network, InnoTeam, etc.)
- What role(s) could research performing organisations could deliver?



<https://europa.eu/InHMPFU>



@DrLMelchor



Lorenzo.MELCHOR-FERNANDEZ@ec.europa.eu

Supporting and connecting
policymaking in the Member States
with scientific research



#Science4Policy

