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# Strengthening Science–Policy Interfaces for One Health in North Africa

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# Science–Policy Interface in the One Health Approach

## *SPI in OH*

### 5- Bottlenecks and root cause analysis

#### *Bottlenecks and root cause analysis*



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## **Bottlenecks in an SPI**

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Bottlenecks in a Science Policy Interface are the ***obstacles or constraints*** that ***slow down or hinder the effective transfer of scientific knowledge*** to policy-making, or vice versa.

Numerous and resulting **from the process of producing science-informed policies:**  
***a meeting of two worlds with different cultures, timeframes and objectives.***



# Root cause analysis within a SPI)

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Aims to identify why scientific knowledge is not effectively integrated into policy decisions.

*The aim is to look beyond symptoms/bottlenecks (e.g. lack of data) to address structural failures: (Table 1.3 of the Action Plan)*

## 1. Identify the root causes



Policy (interests, priorities)



Institutional (coordination, governance)



Technical (data, tools)

To avoid superficial solutions and guide strategic decisions



# Main root causes (1)

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## 1. Political causes (interests, priorities)

### I. Cultural and temporal differences

- **Differences in pace:** Science produces long-term results following a validation process, whereas politics demands immediate responses.

- **Divergent languages and priorities:** Scientists seek precision and nuance, whereas decision-makers need clarity, simplicity and actionable solutions.

### II. Political and Socio-economic Factors

- **Pressure from special interests:** Decisions are often influenced by short-term economic or political considerations that take precedence over scientific evidence.

- **Lack of analytical capacity:** Political institutions may lack the expertise to properly assess and utilise the available scientific data.



## Key root causes (2)

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### 2. Institutional causes (coordination, governance)

#### III. Institutional and Communication Barriers

- **Lack of structured processes:** There is often a lack of formal mechanisms for transferring scientific knowledge to the political sphere.

- **Lack of trust:** Mutual mistrust may exist, with policymakers perceiving science as disconnected from reality, and scientists fearing that their work will be exploited.

#### IV. Integration of local or indigenous knowledge

- **Difficulty in fostering dialogue** between science (based on quantitative data) and traditional knowledge, the social sciences or lived experiences.



## Main root causes (2)

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### 3. Technical causes (data, tools)

#### V. Scientific Uncertainty and Complexity

- **Inherent uncertainty:** Science deals with probabilities, which can be misinterpreted or exploited by policymakers to delay action.
- **Information overload:** The abundance of complex data makes it difficult to identify key conclusions.

# *Root cause analysis*

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The '5 Whys' **method** is a particularly effective problem-solving tool in science-policy interfaces (SPI) for identifying root causes.

*Instead of addressing the symptoms*

*(e.g. "the politician isn't using the report"),*

*these methods help identify the underlying causes*

*(e.g. "the scientific timeline was out of sync with that of the decision-maker")*



# Steps for applying the 5 Whys / Ishikawa diagram to a SPI

## '5 Whys?'

### Define Ask

“**Why?**”: Ask “why” five times, based on facts rather than assumptions.

1. **The stakeholders => Bring together a mixed team:** scientists and decision-makers (or brokers) together.
2. **The problem:** Write a clear and factual statement to clearly define the problem
3. **The appropriate process** (inclusive, on time, operational outcome)
4. **The operational outcome** to aid decision-making
5. **Tackling the root cause:** Developing solutions that address the final “why” (root cause)



## 5P Example 1: Policy-makers are ignoring the scientific evidence

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**Problem:** Public policy is not based on the recommendations of the latest scientific report on climate change.

1. **Why?** The *report was deemed too technical* and not immediately applicable.
2. **Why?** The *scientists did not take into account the operational constraints faced by decision-makers* when drafting the report.
3. **Why?** There *was no co-creation or early dialogue* between the two groups.
4. **Why?** Boundary organisation mechanisms (*knowledge brokers*) are *absent or underfunded*.
5. **Why (Root Cause)?** The institutional structure favours a *linear approach (final reports) rather than ongoing engagement*, due to a lack of dedicated resources.



## 5P Example 2: The report is perceived as lacking legitimacy

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**Problem:** The scientific report is heavily criticised by stakeholders.

1. **Why?** The *data was deemed biased or incomplete* by certain stakeholders.
2. **Why?** The *selection of committee experts* was perceived as *one-sided*.
3. **Why?** The *appointment* process *lacked transparency and inclusivity*.
4. **Why?** The *selection protocols* did not require a diversity of expertise or knowledge.
5. **Why (Root Cause)?** *Weak engagement protocols and pre-existing institutional mistrust*.



## Exercise 3: Identifying bottlenecks

**Complete Table  
1.3 with the  
bottlenecks**

	<b>Techniques Data/Institutional</b>	<b>Institutional Coordination/ Organisational</b>	<b>Policy Decision-making/ Governance</b>
<b>Zoonoses</b>			
<b>Antimicrobial resistance</b>			
<b>Food safety</b>			
<b>Environment</b>			



## Exercise 3: Identify the main gaps

### Input

Mapping SPI and decision-making pathways

### Identify the obstacles

Identify the main gaps/bottlenecks, where they are (data, coordination, decision-making) and prioritise them  
Group (cluster) common issues

### Analyse the root causes

Discuss their **root causes**  
Which obstacles are structural, which are operational, and which can be overcome quickly (**Quick Wins**)?

### Country results

Highlight the three most significant issues.

# Merci

# Thank you

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