



How Earth and planetary scientists can engage in policy making and have a societal voice

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Encompassing a large number of scientific disciplines, the Earth and planetary sciences play an important role in many policy decisions. The use of high-quality research helps policy makers and international bodies (such as the UN) to understand the risks and benefits of each decision and to identify upcoming issues. Ideally, this results in strong policies that benefit the community in which they are enacted. Furthermore, participating in the policy making process allows Earth and planetary scientists to gain a better understanding of what future research is needed by policy makers and society, and the opportunity to diversify their professional network.

Policy makers generally understand the importance of scientific input and many governments and international organisations have implemented initiatives or specific agencies that enable researchers to share their expertise. There is also a growing number of opportunities for scientists to reach out to policy makers and initiate a dialogue.

Unfortunately, while theoretically sound, the use of science in policy is far from straight forward in practice. Despite the opportunities and obvious benefits of scientific engagement within policy processes, it is often difficult for researchers to know how to get started, where to look or who to engage. The EGU aims to reduce this barrier through information on the policy section of the Union's website which summarises geoscience-relevant policy activities within the EU. This includes initiatives such as the EU Commission's database of independent experts and EU Consultations. Additional resources, events and EGU email updates are also available to those who are interested in being more involved in science for policy.

In order to be understood and used by policy makers, scientific research also needs to be communicated effectively. It is important for scientists to understand which government agency or department is relevant to their research and which aspects of their research is likely to be of most interest. It is vital for researchers to avoid academic jargon when talking with citizens and policy makers and to keep the summary of their research as short as possible.