Stronger together – How to collaborate with government to get your research on the policy agenda

CIHR-IPPH Starting investigators workshop
Ottawa, ON

Panel discussion | June 2017

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Collaborating with whom? Govt. 101

Sectors of government

Municipal government
- Mayor
- Councillors
- Public servants

Ministerial department
- Minister
- Partisan advisors (minister’s office)
- Public servants

Legislative assembly / Parliament
- Elected members
- Senators
- Partisan advisors

⇒ Consider relevance, accessibility, influence, your comfort

(Morestín, 2016, 2017; Roxon, 2017)
What makes evidence **relevant** to actors in govt?

Does the evidence speak to their **needs**?

- **Consistent with:**
  - organization’s / team’s **mission**
  - policy maker’s **platform**

  ⇒ Does the evidence **add** to the policy agenda or **help address** it?

- **Public servants:** Self-censorship vs. policy entrepreneurship

(Morestin, 2017)
Know your audience(s)

• Get a grasp of their agendas and contexts...

• ... to inform your KT strategy
  – Participate in their processes
  – Content: Relate (as much as possible) to their framings and the work they do

=> Respond to their needs

(Morestin, 2016; policy advisors, personal communications, Fall 2016; Roxon, 2017)
What else?

Be proactive to make yourself known

Be responsive when govt. actors turn to you

Be persistent...

Be pragmatic about evidence in policy-making

Develop a thick skin

(Morestin, 2016; policy advisors, personal communications, Fall 2016)
A few resources

• Enlightening resources about how political circles view and use scientific evidence
  – Haynes et al. (2011, 2012)
  – Katherine Smith’s work (e.g., 2013a, 2013b, 2014)
  – Paul Cairney’s blog https://paulcairney.wordpress.com/
  – Interview of a former Minister for Health (Roxon, 2017)

• NCCHPP’s Knowledge sharing and public policy project
  http://www.ncchpp.ca/180/News.ccnpps
  Knowledge syntheses + sets of questions to guide development of KT strategy
  Work in progress... more to come!
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References


• Morestin, F. (2016). *Sharing knowledge with the advisors of policy makers – A couple of myths, a couple of tips* [PowerPoint presentation and webinar recording]. Montréal and Québec, Canada: National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ncchpp.ca/182/Presentations.ccnpps?id_article=1616

• Morestin, F. (2017). *The advisors of policy makers: Who are they, how do they handle scientific knowledge and what can we learn about how to share such knowledge with them?* Montréal and Québec, Canada: National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. Retrieved from: http://www.ncchpp.ca/181/publications.ccnpps?id_article=1670


