



The seven rules for hydrologists wanting to make an impact on the water management practice

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Science and policy often seem to be two different universes. Their inhabitants speak different languages, have different concerns, follow different rules and face different reward systems. Yet, science and policy cannot be separated completely. To function as an independent “social field”, science needs the tacit support and finances from the policy world. Moreover, policy may influence science directly through its funding policy. Conversely, science may also influence policy in different ways.

Hydrologists and other scientists often complain that their research is not used in policy. This is often blamed on the limited knowledge of politicians and other stakeholders or on lacking communication skills of the researchers. This paper looks for solutions in a different direction. It presents seven rules that hydrologists and other scientists can follow to promote research use. These rules are based on literature study and on personal experience in a number of projects. They are: (1) Reflect on the nature and possible roles of research; (2) Analyse the stakeholders and issues at stake; (3) Choose whom and what to serve; (4) Decide on your strategy; (5) Design the process to implement your strategy; (6) Communicate!; and (7) Reflect on your own interests and skills. The paper discusses several options concerning these issues and concludes with a discussion of the institutional constraints that scientists face.