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Drylands: Bridging research and policy

- **The context of policy and research are key to whether one will affect the other. But a democratic context does not seem to be essential. In other words, research outputs must “speak the language” of the policy maker.**
- **Good environmental governance is particularly important in dry zones and policy (“political will”) underlies all of this. Can we make realistic recommendations to link our research topics to governance?**
- **Policy makers are short of time and need clear and simple stories – even to the extent that these are often wrong. We must therefore not only simplify but spend more time on ensuring that our information fits in with the agenda-setting process, and is correct.**
- **If there is a demand for policy change by policy makers, then research knowledge is more likely to influence it. If society demands a policy change the process is more complex.**
- **Policy is likely to change fastest in times of crisis**
- **Many NGOs are in the forefront of seeking to change government policy – how should we link with them to mutual benefit in dry lands?**
- **Policy may regard research as “the opposite of action rather than the opposite of ignorance” – how to ensure that the importance of reliable knowledge is appreciated?**
- **We may often have a greater impact through changing processes than by changing policy – eg developing participatory approaches rather than addressing senior politicians. It would be worth exploring options.**