

Handling the complexities of the Science-Policy Interface on different levels

Carsten Neßhöver

Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, UFZ, Leipzig, Germany

Calls to increase the interactions between diverse knowledge holders to support evidence-informed policy-making have been growing over the last couple of decades. At the same time, decision-making and action on the environment, from local to global, seem not to hold pace with its growing problems. Most discussions about this revolve around the challenge of environmental policy implementation competing with other policy interests and how evidence may “compete” in this context. So, science-policy interface (SPI) activities have to take note of this new settings and need to take new forms in order to stay relevant.

In my talk, I will reflect from a practical perspective on these challenges, outlining which new elements are needed at the interface to help make a difference, including (a) inclusion of different forms of knowledge, (b) improving the transparency and role of interface processes, (c) the diversification of knowledge synthesis methods in this context and, finally (d) the role of networking and communication across different knowledge domains in science and beyond. These reflections will be based on insights gathered in recent research on SPIs in Europe in the SPIRAL project, insights from active engagement in the TEEB and IPBES processes and the implementation of a new SPI approach on the European level via the EKLIPSE mechanism, an “experimental” attempt to take these new elements serious.