

## Lessons learned from Covid-19 for the Science–Policy–Society Interface

The collective global experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has provided an unprecedented opportunity to examine the relationship between science, policy and wider society in what is often called the science–policy–society interface(s).

Kristiann Allen, University of Auckland, New Zealand and the International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA) explore the lessons learned during the pandemic and provide six recommendations moving forward. Navigating a novel pathogen and its ensuing pandemic has dispelled some of the most common misperceptions about science policy interfaces (SPIs) and revealed some relevant truths. At least four lessons can be drawn:

1. SPIs require a more sophisticated understanding of their functioning,
2. Certain key roles are highlighted by the pandemic,
3. SPI approaches must be dynamic to respond to different policy stages and conditions of the evolving issue or set of interrelated issues,
4. It is important that SPIs connect nationally, internationally and globally. These lessons are all the more important for future preparedness as a pandemic such as COVID-19 and the associated health responses intersect with climate and other environmental-related pressures and underlying socio-economic disparities within and across countries.

### Recommendations

The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report may have issued advice for pre-pandemic world, but its recommendations for Science–Policy–(and society) interfaces not only hold true, but take on added importance in light of the pandemic’s lessons. Some of the key recommendations are recalled and reframed below:

- Knowledge sharing platforms with data interoperability and accessibility,
- Permanent national expert panels in key areas of sustainable development,
- Science-Society collaboration and co-design mechanisms,
- Investment in sustainability science which brings together scientific, practical and indigenous worldviews,
- Investment in quality science journalism,
- Investment in science diplomacy to encourage global research cooperation, especially South-South and South-North relationships.

These recommendations can be enacted at both national and multi-lateral (global) levels by a mix of issue-specific and generalized SPI structures and processes. The complexity of these interacting sociotechnical and socio-political impacts of the pandemic have thrown into deep relief the importance of well-structured, well-integrated and well-connected SPIs.

Read more at: <https://council.science/current/blog/science-policy-society-lessons-covid/>