



FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF BRIDGING SCIENCE POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR BIODIVERSITY

BIOAGORA SCIENCE POLICY INTERFACE

PILOT TRAINING

BIOAGORA AND SCIENCE POLICY INTERFACE TRAININGS



BioAgora is an ambitious project aiming to support sustainable transformation of our societies in Europe. It aims to connect research results on biodiversity as a transversal issue to the needs of decision-makers. The project facilitates dialogue and mutual understanding between scientists, other knowledge holders and policy actors (<https://bioagora.eu/>).

As part of its mission, the project will organize Science Policy Interface (SPI) trainings/capacity development initiatives over the next three years allowing for the first time scientists and policy-makers to JOINTLY improve their understanding of both the policy and the scientific challenges to better operate at the science-policy interface in relation to biodiversity as a cross-sector topic. To this aim, they will have an opportunity to meet and share their perspectives, constraints, challenges and methodologies but to also exchange in the field with stakeholders and practitioners.

The idea is to go beyond a passive understanding of capacity building or training (“wise people teaching others”) to a mutual learning and co-creation process.

A specific case study identified by BioAgora will serve for each training as a concrete topic to anchor the training in practice and policy contexts.

BIOAGORA HAS THREE JOKER CARDS UP ITS SLEEVE TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE

• THE SENSE OF URGENCY •

IPCC and IPBES have stated it clear and loud: humanity has no choice but to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises before they significantly jeopardise the living conditions of many humans and other living beings on this planet. This requires uncomfortable out-of-the-box but necessary new ways in policy development and implementation, strongly grounded in scientific evidence.

• THE RIGHT PEOPLE •

BioAgora is building on 20 years of expertise in Science-Policy Interfaces on Biodiversity at European Level and brings together competent and knowledgeable initiatives and networks.

• THE RIGHT MOMENTUM •

BioAgora is building for the future and has the opportunity to test and adopt a learning-by-doing approach and will offer an innovative co-development training course to be pilot tested in 2024 before being refined in future editions. Further SPI trainings could then be organized at different scales (local, national, regional) through open calls to involve other players and initiate a snowball effect.

UNDERSTANDING, TRUST AND CROSS-SECTOR COMPETENCE FOR A COMMUNITY OF COMMITTED PROFESSIONALS

PILOT TRAINING OBJECTIVES



- Strengthening the understanding of biodiversity as a transversal topic across disciplines and sectors taking the case study as illustration.
- Catalysing mutual understanding and trust between scientists and policy makers to co-create an innovative way to transform interactions.
- Developing participants skills to have more impact in their professional environment addressing the capacity development needs of inclusion, inter-transdisciplinarity, diverse values and world views.
- Building a long-term community of boundary spanners: scientists and policy makers from various disciplines and sectors who initiate an SPI network for life connecting socio-economic, biodiversity and climate change challenges.
- Setting up a long-term “think tank” process supporting participants (both scientists and policy makers) to think out of the box and outside their comfort zone.

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PILOT TRAINING OBJECTIVES

WHY A JOINT SPI TRAINING FOR BOTH POLICY ADVISORS AND SCIENTISTS TOGETHER ?

The BioAgora report “D 5.1 Mapping the needs of decision- makers to tailor capacity development activities” “identified eighteen major capacity development needs. Most of these have been reported in the literature before and have already been addressed to different degrees by existing capacity development efforts. Hence, the persistence of these needs suggests that there is a mismatch between the demand and supply side of capacity development initiatives, highlighting the importance of creating better targeted and less fragmented initiatives.

“

[LIEN / bioagora.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/D5.1-Final-draft.pdf](https://bioagora.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/D5.1-Final-draft.pdf)

The SPI Pilot training will provide a trial to explore an innovative approach to tackle the third type of capacity development capacities identified in D5.1: Raising a new cohort of boundary spanners:

- Target groups : mid-career researchers and policy advisors.
- Addresses : complexity, inclusion, bringing people together, diverse values and worldviews, inter- and transdisciplinarity, competences to co-produce knowledge.
- Expected outcomes : increased number of experts (boundary spanners) who can co-ordinate and manage inclusive and impactful science-policy-society interactions, enhancement of both individual and organizational capacities.
- Modalities : in-person interactive training for a few days using real-life examples and focusing not just on individual skills but also on developing shared understandings and changing mindsets.



“ Be honest...
scientists and policy makers,
we all have our cognitive biases
and prejudices, how do we acknowledge
them and address them ? ”

“ Let’s debug the myths of “science tells the truth
to policy” and “policy always cherry picks the
evidence they want to back up their agenda” ”

“ Let’s move from
“this is a communication problem”
to “what common language could
we develop” ? ”

“ How do we jointly address the need to act
and develop policy for wicked problems under
uncertainty : “what is enough knowledge ?” ”

“ Let’s explore practice,
policy and science perspectives
in the field ! ”

FRESHWATER MULTI-USES IN A TIME OF CLIMATE CHANGE

PILOT CASE STUDY



PRINCIPLES : FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

The pilot training will first build on developing a common vision and understanding of why participants are together in this co-learning process and focus on developing a mutual understanding of each other's roles, goals and constraints.

Participants will be invited to jointly develop and approve working principles for an agile and safe working environment.

The training design will provide a mix of inputs from inspiring speakers, participatory/collective intelligence methodologies (e.g. Samoan circles, World café, field experiences, serious games), and field experiences with stakeholders.

To stimulate co-learning, we will work on formats that rely more on the experiential to go beyond intellectual understanding and engage also with deeper and emotional levels.

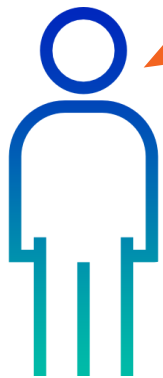
For the first pilot training, we propose as case study to look at a major challenge in the next decade : freshwater at the intersection between food, health, and biodiversity conservation and restoration. This aligns with the IPBES Nexus assessment : Biodiversity, water, food, and health and will connect with the the BioAgora freshwater demonstration case.

The idea is to mix co-learning on SPI by working on a topic that is relevant for participants and will allow to dig into some relevant capacity development needs for this topic as identified by BioAgora D 5.1 : Effective communication, bringing people together, policy literacy, differences in attitudes, mindset and knowledge base, and silo thinking.

The pilot training will give an opportunity to policy makers and scientists to jointly reflect on land and water management as well as nature conservation and restoration in the face of multi-uses and climate change.

To illustrate the freshwater case study, we will organize the training in the Drôme river valley so participants can meet stakeholders and have a real-life experience of the environment in which they work and the decisions they have to face in relation to multi-uses of water. The Drôme River is one of the last free dam rivers in Europe, at the cross-road of several issues in relation to freshwater biodiversity conservation, watershed management in drought conditions and agricultural practices evolution in the face of climate change.

POLICY MAKERS ENGAGEMENT



WHAT'S THE ADDED VALUE FOR ME AS A POLICY MAKER AT NATIONAL OR EUROPEAN LEVEL ?

To spend 5 days on the training, but gain weeks in your job : Take the step back that will make you gain time on the long-term

Challenge your way of working with scientific evidence to be more efficient and effective

Learn how to ask and scope a question to get the knowledge and evidence you need

Be part of an inspiring community supporting different ways to use evidence in policy

The training objective is to provide two levels of learning : a better understanding of the case study topic while at the same time allowing policy actors to experiment and learn how to better interface and work together with scientists.

The training will provide insights on the case study, enriching participants' views by highlighting the links to their respective sector and the important systemic connections.

The SPI pilot will open up perspectives from various sources of knowledge and allow policy makers to confront their needs and constraints to those of scientists but also to meet with practitioners in the field (and learn from their knowledge and needs).

We welcome a maximum of 10 policy makers to participate.

SCIENTISTS ENGAGEMENT



**WHAT'S THE ADDED
VALUE FOR ME AS
A SCIENTIST ?**

**Take a step back
to reflect on your
understanding and
expectations in how
scientific evidence is
used in policy**

**Challenge your way
of working with policy
makers to be more
efficient and effective**

**Learn how to understand
and scope a question to
prepare the knowledge
and evidence that is
needed**

**Be part of an inspiring
community to develop
innovative ways to use
scientific evidence
in policy**

**We welcome a maximum of
10 scientists to participate.**

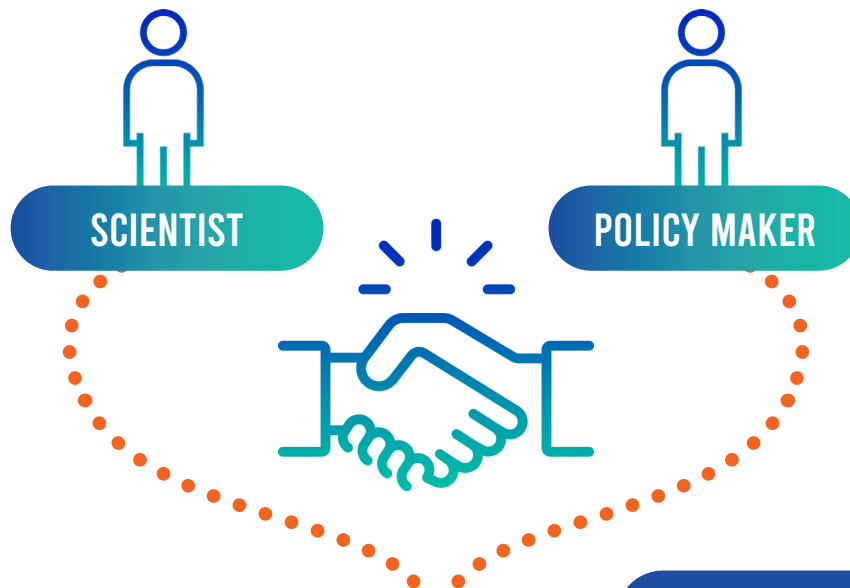
The pilot will open a call for interested scientists engaged in freshwater and biodiversity issues. A maximum of 10 scientists will be selected based on gender, diversity of disciplines (e.g. social scientists) and previous experience with SPI.

For scientists, the objective is to experiment and learn how to better interface and work together with policy makers as well as learn from policy makers and increase their policy literacy.

The training will also provide insights on the case study topic and allow for scientists to exchange their views on available knowledge in an interdisciplinary way and how to address policy makers needs and constraints.

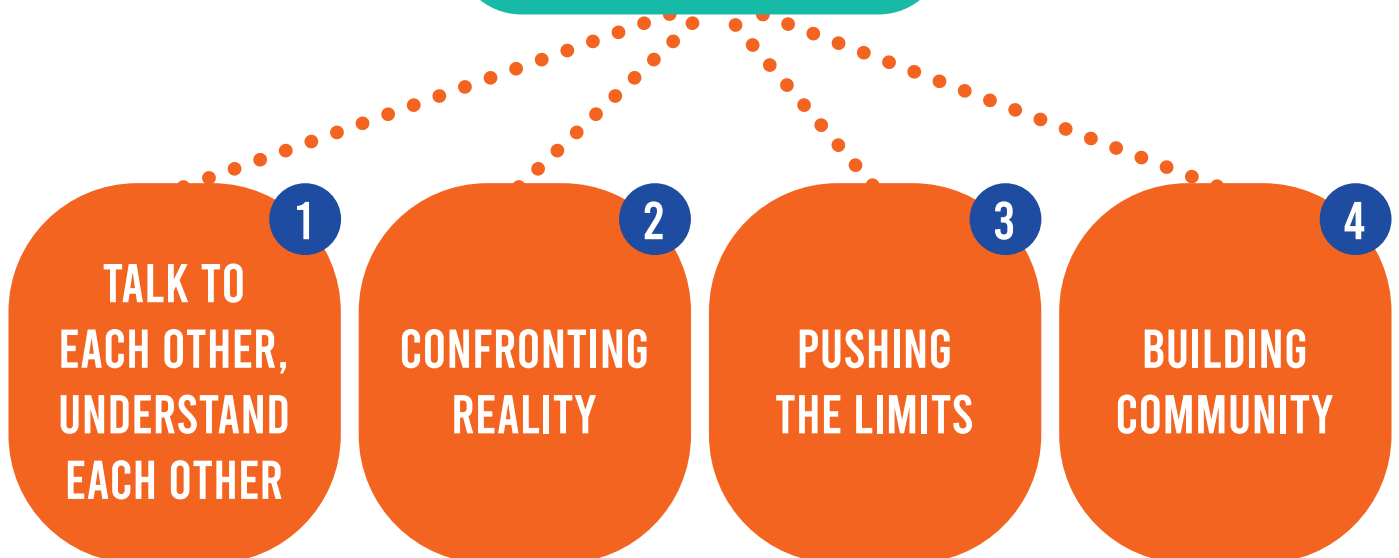
FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

PILOT PROCESS



PILOT TRAINING

CO-LEARNING



FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

PILOT PROCESS

The pilot will be organised following a co-learning training methodology mixing participants exchanges and inputs from inspiring speakers and anchored in 4 stages.

1

TALK TO EACH OTHER, UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER

Taking stock of current ways policy and science work together

- Defining current problem/knowledge/policy fora and policy cycle stages and developing mutual understanding of constraints, requirements, timelines, problems faced by each community. Reflecting on the case study to see how this illustrates some of the constraints, issues, ideas.

2

CONFRONTING REALITY

Meet practitioners and actors in the field

- **“Confront the real”**
Connect with the challenges on the ground related to the case study and build relationships through a field experience.

INSPIRING TALKS

- « A story of honest brokering, science policy interfaces and boundary spanners. » •
- « Chronicle of the Nature Restoration Law : power game and scientific evidence. » •
- « Making decisions under uncertainty : wicked problems, and « best possible options » •
- « Understanding the nexus: biodiversity, water, food and health in the face of climate change : interdisciplinarity in action » •



FROM AN INDIVIDUAL TO A COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE

PILOT PROCESS

3

PUSHING THE LIMITS

Co-create new ways pushing the boundaries

Putting together the lessons from the field trip and inputs from inspiring speakers, participants will explore what could be a transformative way to collaborate at the Science Policy interface.

INSPIRING TALKS

- « Values and identities : make the biases come to the surface » •
- « Transforming conflicts and multi-stakeholder dialogues: myth and reality » •
- « Water and Food : the need to transform food systems at local, national and global levels » •

4

BUILDING COMMUNITY

“Plan for the future”

How do we make what we have learned sustainable ?
How to make the collaboration transform our institutions and lead to a sustainable SPI ?



• RULE 1 •

CONFIDENTIALITY
(what is said in training remains in training)

• RULL 2 •

EMPATHY
(take the shoes of the others)

• RULL 3 •

RESPECT OPENNESS
(welcome different view points, no judgements)

• RULL 4 •

BE HERE NOW
(Focus on and commit to the training)

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

23-27
SEPT
2024

5 DAYS

Arrival on Monday and
departure on Friday



FRANCE

DROME RIVER VALLEY

At the beginning of May 2024, we will organize a introductory webinar for policy makers at EU and Members states level, and scientists to explain the pilot objectives, process and outcomes. The webinar will end with a “call for interest” form for interested participants.

BIOAGORA SPI
PILOT TRAINING CONTACT
ESTELLE.BALIAN@GMAIL.COM