Building Stronger Links Between Researchers and Policy Makers

Matthew Lucas
Industry Canada
Outline

- Issue
- Challenges
- The ISRN Cluster Study
- Lessons Learned
- Opportunities
The Issue: Knowledge Transfer

- How to improve policy makers’ understanding and use of research? – framed largely as an issue of communications.
- How to improve the applicability of research to policy making? – framed largely as an issue of relevance.
- The “policization” of research requires ongoing engagement between researchers and policy makers.
Ongoing Engagement Around:

- framing research questions and policy needs
- understanding the current state of knowledge and practice
- structuring research projects
- communicating findings and refining questions, needs, and practices
Challenges to Effective Engagement

Who? – diverse, changing communities
What? – different interests, pressures
When? – varying time frames
Where? – geographic boundaries
Why? – desired outcomes differ
How? – different modes of participation and communication
ISRN Cluster Study

- Senior policy makers regarded as partners from the beginning
- Involved various levels of policy makers and advisors and researchers
- Sustained interaction throughout different aspects of the project
- Formal and informal interaction between senior policy makers and researchers
- Various modes used to communicate results
Lessons Learned

Engage

– early
– often
– across a variety of levels
– formally and informally
– in policy specific communication
– with current and future projects in mind
Opportunities to Engage Policy Makers

• newsletters
• website
• government lecture series
• policy focused workshops
• written policy summaries and concise literature reviews
Conclusion

Policy questions rarely die, but they often hibernate.

Ongoing interaction between researchers and policy makers will benefit both.